POST-PRINT VERSION

Huertas-Valdivia, I., Gallego-Burín, A. R., Castillo, A., & Ruiz, L. (2021). Why don't high-performance work systems always achieve superior service in hospitality? The key is servant leadership. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, *49*, 152-163.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2021.09.007

ZENODO POST-PRINT DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.6607121

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Acknowledgements: This study was supported by a project from the Spanish Ministry of Economy, Industry, and Competitiveness (ECO2017-84138-P).

The authors wish to thank the members of the collaborating hotel association for their sincere willingness to help throughout the data collection process in this study. We extend our deepest gratitude to the anonymous front-line workers who completed the online questionnaire with such care and kindness. We hope that the results of this study help to raise awareness of how important it is that your hospitality corporations take care of you, their most valuable assets.

WHY DON'T HIGH-PERFORMANCE WORK SYSTEMS ALWAYS ACHIEVE SUPERIOR SERVICE IN HOSPITALITY? THE KEY IS SERVANT LEADERSHIP

1. Introduction

The hospitality sector currently faces a fiercely competitive market environment due to proliferation of alternative lodging options, such as tourist apartments and private lodging rentals. Hoteliers must increase their efforts to focus on the unique features of hotel service, the elements that enhance excellent customer care: professional and dedicated workers available 24/7 to satisfy heterogeneous, changing customer demands (Chen, 2017). Customers' frequent interactions with hotel staff make the employee's attitude, behavior, and ability to solve unpredicted situations promptly (e.g., flight cancellations, lost luggage, customer illness) determining factors in positive customer experience. Personnel (and the service-orientation philosophy that must permeate organizational culture) are undoubtedly one of the most important resources in hospitality firms.

Although being friendly or nice is a value-added component that service employees provide, it is not enough to provide superior customer service (Schneider & Bowen, 1993). Further, customer needs change constantly, and service delivery cannot be prescribed or standardized. Latitude and proactivity are thus vital to employees' provision of excellent, customer-oriented service (Ye *et al.*, 2019). In this sense, Karatepe (2013) advises companies to encourage employees to adapt their behavior to the specificity of each situation, even "going out of their way" to help customers. Yet not all employees are willing to go beyond their formalized job description to make the additional effort sometimes necessary to satisfy a client.

In such situations, hospitality practitioners must understand how to create an organizational environment that "motivates behaviors that go beyond formal job requirements" and "are particularly functional for achieving desirable customer outcomes" (Sun *et al.,* 2007, p.561), also known as extra-role behavior (ERB). Hospitality companies thus seek to nurture engaged, customer-centered employees who can give their most when handling all types of situations that arise during service encounters.

A recent study points to work engagement (WE) as a promising solution, revealing a relationship between WE and ERB (Orlowski *et al.*, 2020) and highlighting WE as strategic for organizational effectiveness. Nevertheless, although engaged employees "perform better and are more productive (…), hospitality researchers still need to find additional predictors of WE" (Orlowski, Bufquin, & Nalley, 2020, p. 1). Empirical research in other fields has demonstrated that employees' perception of human resources (HR) systems is a determining factor in their behaviors and attitudes at work (Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Wang *et al*., 2020).

Achieving an engaged, enthusiastic, proactive customer-centered workforce is, however, a difficult task for hospitality managers. Why? Because hotel settings are still commonly

characterized by occupational stress, high turnover, long irregular working hours, and work overload during peak season. Moreover, important HR practices are sometimes overlooked due to short contractual relationships for seasonal employment, and hotel employees usually lack training opportunities and receive low wages and poor recognition (Casado-Díaz & Simón, 2016). Under these circumstances, it can be challenging for hospitality leaders to encourage their workforce to its their utmost when serving customers.

The *service-profit chain* model developed by Heskett et al. (2008) proposes the benefits companies gain from investing material and intangible resources in their employees. Studies show that viewing tourism employees as *internal customers*—by treating them well and investing resources and effort in them—creates employee satisfaction and loyalty that spill over into employees' treatment of *external customers*. Over time (lag), this treatment improves service to external customers, with positive results for firm revenue (Solnet et al., 2018) and other business outcomes.

Prior evidence also suggests that certain managerial leadership styles positively influence workers' engagement level and behavior (Othman *et al.*, 2017). Researchers have attempted to identify the best leadership style for a hotel by exploring what a leader does and should do to be effective in such idiosyncratic workplaces (Huertas-Valdivia *et al.*, 2019; Ling *et al.*, 2017).

Some studies have identified servant leadership (SL) as an appropriate style for hospitality, as this style promotes a serving culture and has a positive impact on employees' psychological capital (Safavi & Bouzari, 2020) and on work-related outcomes such as career satisfaction and adaptive behavior (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). Propounded by Greenleaf (1977) in the 70's, servant leadership has gained research attention in the last few years as a promising leadership style best suited to current work environments because servant leaders are good, empathetic listeners strongly committed to the growth of their teams. Servant leadership is a more supportive leadership style that encompasses activities such as stewardship, providing suitable suggestions and directions, empowering and developing personnel, keeping subordinates' best interests in mind, and promoting interpersonal acceptance (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Nevertheless, "there remains a great deal to learn regarding the conditions under which this influence [of servant leadership] is enhanced or diminished" (Neubert, Hunter, & Tolentino, 2016: pp. 896).

Although recent research "provides evidence for arguments that SL matters in the hospitality industry" (Wu, Tse, Fu, Kwan, & Liu, 2013, p. 383), the topic remains underexplored "in *major hospitality and tourism journals,"* and additional research is needed "to ferret out the underlying mechanism(s) through which SL influences various outcomes" (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020, p. 2077). For example, Ye *et al.* (2019) remark that the "existing body of research concerning SL in the hospitality industry sheds little light on its effect on proactive service behaviors" (p. 1331).

For service organizations such as hotels, it is thus important to understand how to create an environment that motivates employees to *go the extra mile* when serving guests. Better

understanding is needed, however, of how best to combine specific contextual factors (HR practices and leadership styles) to generate positive employee outputs in hotel settings.

To fill all of the above-mentioned gaps and respond to the scholarly calls made to enrich the hospitality management literature, this study aims to answer the following questions: How can hospitality organizations foster leader behavior that best engages workers and encourages employees to give their best at work? Can high-performance work systems (HPWSs) positively affect WE? Do HPWSs create a favorable context for the emergence of SL? Can SL trigger a proactive service conduct such as ERB? Does SL contribute to employees' WE? This study therefore has two main research goals: 1) to disentangle whether HPWSs encourage the emergence of SL; and 2) to analyze the impact of both HPWSs and SL on hotel employees' WE and ERB.

In a nutshell, this study aims to expand knowledge of the underlying mechanisms that explain how HPWSs influence the emergence of SL behaviors in managers, as understanding these mechanisms can generate personal engagement at work and determine whether all such practices in turn influence employee performance in hospitality. The study illuminates the circumstances under which HPWSs unleash ERB in hospitality employees and clarifies why merely implementing HPWSs does not guarantee exceptional behavior in workers. Organizations must first achieve conditions of engagement (in this case, as the result of a servant leadership style). That is, servant leadership in a hotel context of HPWSs generates ERB in employees only when the (servant) leader has first engaged employees.

This article's findings make significant contributions to the hospitality literature in several ways. First, they respond to previous calls to investigate organizational conditions that enhance SL and the underlying mechanisms through which SL influences outcomes important for hospitality (Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). Second, when interpreted through the lens of Organizational Identification theory, the results underscore HPWSs as a clear antecedent of SL behavior and illustrate how both variables combine to boost WE. To the authors' best knowledge, this is the first study to examine HPWSs as an antecedent of SL. Third, drawing on the role modelling principle of Social Learning theory, the study reveals that the example managers provide through SL actions can foster more service-oriented behavior among employees, but only when employees are engaged.

This study demonstrates empirically that organizations can foster excellent customer service in employees by first creating the conditions for leaders to exhibit servant behaviors and then engaging employees, who will ultimately perform better service. This research is thus useful for hospitality practitioners who seek to nurture employee WE and increase customer service, and for HR managers who are planning leadership development programs for their employees.

The paper is structured as follows: The first section presents the study theoretical framework, reviews the main research concepts and related literature to justify the research hypotheses. Next, the methods and sample are presented. After explaining the results, the paper discusses the study's main theoretical and practical implications. It concludes by acknowledging limitations and proposing future research avenues.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Theoretical framework

Three theoretical frameworks can help to explain the human resources dynamics within organizations explored in this study.

2.1.1. Organization Identification Theory

Mael and Ashforth (1992, p.103) define organizational identification "as a perceived oneness with an organization and the experience of the organization's successes and failures as one's own". Organizational identification is a useful mechanism for understanding the degree to which some workers (frequently in top managerial positions) perceive their self-identity as intertwined with the organization's identity. Such individuals can even define themselves with characteristics similar to those attributed to the organization in which they work and are more inclined to overlap the organization's needs with theirs.

Organizational identification thus occurs when individuals' beliefs about their organization become self-referential or self-defining, that is, when individuals integrate beliefs about the organization into their identity (Whetten & Godfrey, 2012).

2.1.2. Social Exchange Theory

Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964) explains the repayment or reciprocal relationship that may exist between employees and the company: the two agents commit to and invest in each other's future growth and development, engaging in actions based on the belief that the other party will reciprocate.

In line with this theory, individuals' behavior is the outcome of a process of exchange with the company in which they work: when workers perceive that the company takes good care of them, they feel indebted to their organization and tend to reciprocate by adopting positive behavior beneficial to the company and/or by developing stronger emotional bonds with the employer and feeling more engaged.

2.1.3. Social Learning theory

According to Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971), individuals learn by observing others' behavior and its consequences. Social environment is a determining factor in employees' job attitudes and guides future actions.

This theory can help to explain how individuals in organizations undergo a social learning process when they gain information about desired behaviors in the organization by observing others. Individuals perceive the behavior expected and reinforced in prominent members and take these members as role models. During this process, organizations and leaders reinforce

specific behavior by stimulating or rewarding certain actions, playing an important role in guiding workers to adopt preferred behaviors. In such organizational contexts, followers thus tend to imitate the leader's behavior."

2.2. High-Performance Work Systems and Servant Leadership (SL)

Companies' practices, policies, and code of conduct inherently transmit messages to managers about the desired way to treat and lead employees. A specific combination of HR practices can thus create a unique organizational culture that shapes desired behaviors among workers and supervisors, such as excellence in service performance.

HPWSs are sets of mutually reinforcing, complementary HR practices (e.g., selective staffing, extensive skills training, developmental performance appraisals, motivating rewards, and employee participation mechanisms, among others) oriented to improving employee skills, motivation, and participation opportunities within the organization to increase performance (Sun *et al.*, 2007). Since employee performance in hospitality is closely intertwined with service behavior, employers can deliver messages about desired service-oriented behavior by implementing HPWSs in hospitality.

When implemented by supervisors, HPWSs can generate a cognitive connection with the company's values, goals, and service objectives. This connection can be explained by Organizational Identification theory.

Based on Organizational Identification theory, leaders with "high overlap between their self-identity and the identity of their organization will tend to make little distinction between what is beneficial for the organization and what is beneficial for the self," eagerly pursuing actions that help their organization and its members (Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012, p. 574). Servant leaders who strongly identify with the service organization in which they work will likely be other-focused and centered on the growth and prosperity of the organization, doing what is right for the firm and its members. Servant leaders will thus focus on helping others and prioritize bringing out followers' full potential (Liden *et al.*, 2015).

In a service organization, HPWSs function as a communication mechanism about the desirability of maximizing service-oriented performance, since the essence of the hospitality industry performance is to serve customers and cater to them with excellence. Leaders working in a hotel who identify with the service organization in which they work will likely feel compelled to nurture internal and external customer service, and in turn to display a SL style. Given the importance of organizational context in generating specific behavior among supervisors, we expect HPWSs oriented towards increasing employee participation, motivation, and empowerment to encourage the emergence of more participatory and employee-oriented leadership styles, such as SL. Hypothesis 1 is proposed accordingly:

H1. HPWSs significantly influence SL.

2.3. The Relationship between HPWSs, Work Engagement (WE), and SL

Some work-contextual factors affect employees' experience of work and psychological fulfillment. Clear evidence in the literature shows how organizational support (Rich *et al.*, 2010), service climate (Barnes & Collier, 2013), and organizational HRM practices (Alfes *et al.*, 2013; Karatepe, 2013) are directly and positively related to employees' WE level in service firms.

WE is a psychological state of mind characterized by *dedication* (sense of personal attachment to work), *absorption* (deep involvement at work, forgetting the sense of time), and *vigor* (displaying great energy) (Schaufeli *et al.*, 2002). This internal psychological mechanism generates the employee's positive attitude towards work. Wang *et al.* (2020: p. 142) affirm that "the employee HR perceptions encapsulate the messages that employees receive from their employers by observing or experiencing HR practices." Some HR practices communicate to employees the important message that they are valued and cared for. Since HPWSs aim to enhance employees' involvement and to leverage their competences, employees would seem to express stronger emotional bonds with the organization when they perceive that their expectations have been fulfilled and that their company takes care of them (Kehoe & Wright, 2013).

Research demonstrates the impact of specific HR systems on employee outcomes. For example, Karatepe (2013) finds evidence that "frontline employees working in environments where there are a number of high-performance work practices may have high levels of energy and feel dedicated and may be happily immersed in their work" (p. 132). In line with Social Exchange theory (Blau, 1964), individuals' behavior is the outcome of an exchange process with the company in which they work: when workers perceive that the company takes care of them, they tend to reciprocate by developing stronger emotional bonds with the employer and feeling more engaged. Given prior evidence that HPWSs can impact WE, Hypothesis 2 is thus proposed:

H2. HPWSs significantly influence WE.

Superiors' leadership style has also been found to contribute to employees' WE level (Othman *et al.*, 2017). Prior evidence shows that employees feel more attached and enthusiastic at work when managers display "positive leadership styles" (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2020). Carter and Baghurst (2014), for example, identify a positive influence of SL on employee WE in the restaurant sector.

Kaya and Karatepe (2020) demonstrate that successful implementation of SL engenders positive employee outcomes, such as WE. SL can be a critical generator of WE because it represents the company's orientation towards employees' best interests. Servant leaders are a positive force in spreading the company's HR orientation; they foster participation, motivation, and ability development. Organizational contexts created by specific HR policies thus contribute to implementation of a successful SL style, potentially engendering positive

employee outcomes such as WE. In sum, HPWS work contexts favoring other-oriented leadership style in managers can shape the processes by which people present or absent themselves in performing tasks. Hypothesis 3 is thus proposed:

H3. The relationship between HPWSs and WE is mediated by SL.

2.4. Extra-Role Behavior (ERB)

The customer-oriented nature of the hotel industry can require employees to go beyond their job duties to satisfy customers' expectations. Some employees engage in discretionary behavior beyond role description to provide excellent service, making exceptions and *going the extra mile* when necessary (Peláez *et al.*, 2020). Bettencourt and Brown (1997: p. 41) define ERBs as "discretionary behaviors of contact employees in serving customers that extend beyond formal role requirements".

Some workplaces seem especially good at boosting ERBs. Many service organizations design their HR policy architecture by bundling practices to improve performance. Sun *et al*. (2007: p. 560) argue that "high performance human resources practices foster employees' shared perceptions of a supportive organizational environment that motivates discretionary behaviors."

Extant literature provides evidence of the direct effect of HPWSs on various job outcomes and proactive behaviors, such as organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) and/or job satisfaction (Edgar *et al*., 2020; Garg, 2019; Hai *et al*., 2020). In line with Social Exchange theory (Blau, 1964), when employees perceive that the company takes good care of them (for example, has a fair compensation and rewards system or permits participation mechanisms and other HR practices included in HPWSs), they feel indebted to the organization and repay it by engaging in various self-initiated actions oriented to improving service delivery. HPWSs that encourage employee empowerment, foster participation, and reward customer-orientation may enhance hospitality workers' incorporation of ERBs into their *repertoire*. Hypothesis 4 thus proposes:

H4. HPWSs significantly influence ERB

Research on *service-profit-chain* logic notes the considerable "spillover effects" of fostering positive employee experiences at work (Heskett *et al.*, 2008). For Fabi *et al*. (2015), employees are more motivated to adopt positive attitudes and behaviors at work when they feel valued and satisfied with their organization. Achieving WE can thus be an important determinant of workers' efforts to go the extra mile to satisfy customers' needs.

Analyzing a sample of restaurant employees, Orlowski, Bufquin, and Nalley (2020) recently demonstrated the effect of employees' perceptions of supervisors and coworkers on employees' WE levels, and the influence of this effect on employees' ERB. In a Romanian

hospitality context, Karatepe (2013) demonstrates that WE fully mediates the effects of HPWSs on employee outcomes such as job performance and ERB.

Evidence shows that supportive HR practices (such as HPWSs) lead employees to experience WE, making them more likely to work harder and display higher levels of discretionary effort (Alfes *et al.*, 2013). Based on this premise, it is expected that HPWSs make employees feel that the employer cares for their wellbeing. Such conditions lead employees to experience WE and adopt more positive attitudes and behaviors at work, as in Hypothesis 5:

H5. The relationship between HPWSs and ERB is mediated by employee WE.

Prior research emphasizes that highly involved employees tend to increase their psychological work adjustment, well-being, and effectiveness in work processes (Peláez, Coo, & Salanova, 2020). Organizational practices can induce and enhance members' discretionary effort through different mechanisms.

Firstly, the HR context can foster servant leaders to encourage their workers to improve service delivery. HPWSs provide clear performance-oriented behavior which, when upheld by servant leaders, can increase employee motivation to serve customers exceptionally well, going beyond formal role requirements when necessary. In line with the Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1971), leaders perceived as having desirable qualities frequently serve as role models for followers, who tend to imitate some of their immediate superiors' behaviors. Prior research (Liden *et al.*, 2014) confirms that servant leaders' followers emulate their supervisors' behavior, prioritizing others' needs above their own. Employees' perception that their managers' servant behaviors are desirable within their organization leads to them to replicate those service-oriented behaviors by exerting extra effort when serving customers.

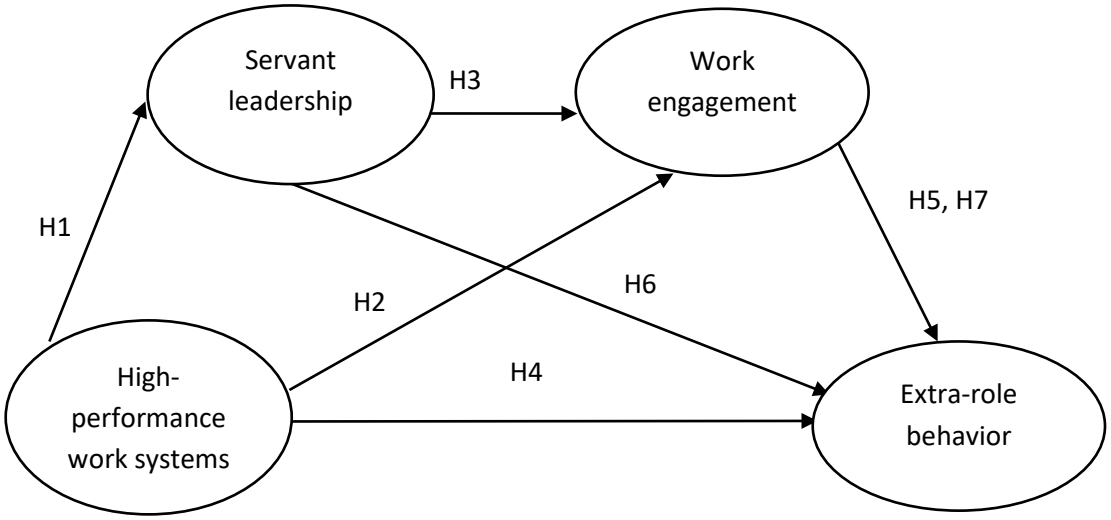
Secondly, HPWSs provide employees with job security, career promotion opportunities, and clear organizational norms that may enhance a sense of gratitude and belonging to the organization, encouraging WE. Managers' SL has also been found to be a strong predictor of WE in service contexts (Carter & Baghurst, 2014; Kaya & Karatepe, 2020). Fan *et al.* (2018) argue theoretically that servant leadership can strengthen the positive impact of HPWSs, based on the job demands and resources (JD-R) model. HPWSs can thus be expected to influence ERB through SL and then WE.

H6. The relationship between HPWSs and ERB is mediated by SL.

H7. The relationship between HPWSs and ERB is serially mediated through SL and WE.

Figure 1 illustrates the research model supporting the hypothesized relationships.

Figure 1. Conceptual model



3. Methodology

3.1. Instrument

An online questionnaire divided into four short sections was designed using *Lime Survey* to collect data for the current study. The first section presented the researchers and briefly explained the survey's purpose and duration. This section also thanked participants for their voluntary collaboration and ensured them of the anonymity of responses.

To ensure that respondents could understand the tool easily, special care was given to making the questionnaire's grammar and vocabulary as simple as possible, as recommended by Gomes Guimarães *et al.* (2018). All scale items were checked through English-Spanish back-translation by four bilingual individuals to ensure accuracy of the translated scales (Schaffer and Riordan, 2003). The resulting questionnaire was also pre-tested prior to final administration in a pilot study composed of 6 front-desk agents. Minor wording changes were made to ensure comprehensibility.

The measurement scales employed in the study were adapted from the existing literature:

- SL was operationalized using the Liden *et al.*'s (2015) SL scale (where employees rated their direct supervisor on items such as: *"My supervisor emphasizes the importance of giving back to the community; puts my best interests ahead of his/her own").*

- In line with Hai *et al.* (2020: p.517), HPWSs were assessed using eighteen items from Sun *et al.* (2007) "that ha[d] been demonstrated to exhibit strong psychometric properties" that measured "selective staffing, extensive training, results-oriented appraisals, employee participation, and job description". A second-order construct reflected a comprehensive

measure of the HR system. Examples of the items employed are: *"Very extensive efforts are made in personnel selection"; "Employees are offered formal training programs to advance their professional and career growth in this organisation"; "This job has an up-to-date description", etc.*

- WE was assessed with the 9-item shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) (Schaufeli *et al.,* 2002) (e.g., *"At my work, I am bursting with energy; I am enthusiastic about my job").*

-ERB was measured through the scale developed by Bettencourt and Brown (1997), using items such as: *"I voluntarily assist customers even if it means going beyond job requirements; I often go above and beyond the call of duty when serving customers."*

The scales' content validity was ensured by implementing 4 rounds of Q-sort procedures, following Moore and Benbasat (1991).

The researchers controlled for several variables that could confound the relationships analyzed. The three control variables used are dichotomous: employee's and manager's gender (0=male, 1=female) (Lin *et al.*, 2019). The relation between type of contract (part-time=0, full time=1) and employee's ERB was explored, since part-time employment is generally associated with poor working conditions (Bartoll *et al.*, 2014)

3.2. Sample and Data Collection Procedures

Fabi *et al.* (2015) affirmed that HPWSs research had neglected measurement of individual employee perceptions and reactions. To fill this gap, the sample of respondents was composed of hospitality workers, mostly front desk agents. As in recent studies (Edgar *et al.*, 2020; Hai e*t al.*, 2020), this sample was well positioned to provide knowledge of employees' perception of the influence of HPWSs. The study focused on hotels on the Costa del Sol in southern Spain. This study population was chosen for several reasons. First, the region is one of the most popular tourism destinations in Spain and concentrates many hotels in a relatively small area to cater to high numbers of tourists throughout the year. Second, the research group had professional connections with these hotels (Liu *et al.*, 2021). Thirdly, Adler (1983) recommends selecting a sample located in a relatively homogeneous geographical, cultural, legal, and political space to minimize the impact of other variables that cannot be controlled in the empirical research.

The study population was obtained from a regional tourism association of 220 hotels. Respondents completed the questionnaire through a link provided by the researchers. A total of 293 employees from 153 hotels volunteered to participate (representing by hotel unit 69.54% of the hotel population of the region). Several recent studies in the hospitality literature used similar sample size (Aguiar-Quintana *et al*., 2020; Safavi & Bouzari, 2020; Sigala & Chalkiti, 2015; Tripathi *et al*., 2021). Participating hotels were mostly 4- and 5-star hotels (55.29% of the sample), with an average size of 102.43 rooms (SD= 102.717) and 33.34 workers (SD= 43.56). A Mann-Whitney U test was performed to determine whether significant differences existed between the distribution of the sample and of the hotel

population. The results showed that the sample did not differ significantly from the hotel population distribution.

Among respondents, 51.9% were women. Staff members in the 18-30 age bracket composed 43.7% of the sample, while 52.22% were 31-50 years old. Roughly 62.8% (two thirds of the sample) held a bachelor's degree, and 22.6% had pursued senior high school or vocational school. The participants' mean organizational job tenure was approximately 5.12 years (SD=6.64). Nearly 80% of respondents had been working with their current manager for more than 5 years. The manager's gender was female in most of the cases (169 cases). For more detail on the sample characteristics, see Table 1.

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Informants´ characteristics	**Percentage and Frequency (N)**	**Organization´ characteristics**	**Percentage and Frequency (N)**
Gender		**Hotel star rating**	
Male	48.10% (141)	1 star	1.36% (4)
Female	51.90% (152)	2 stars	6.82% (20)
Education		3 stars	33.80% (99)
		4 stars	46.76% (137)
High School or vocational school	22.60% (66)	5 stars	11.26% (33)
University Studies	62.80% (184)	**Number of employees**	
Master/ Doctorate	14.70% (43)	≤ 25	23.90% (70)
Type of contract		26 - 50	54.30% (159)
Full time	87.40% (188)	51-75	16.70% (49)
Part time	35.80% (105)	≥ 76	1.70% (51)
Age		**Average number of rooms**	
≤ 30	43.70% (128)	102.43 (SD= 102.72)	
31-50	52.22% (153)		
≥51	4.09% (12)		
Manager's gender			
Male	42.30% (124)		
Female	57.70% (169)		
Average job tenure			
5.12 years (SD= 6.64)			

3.3. Outliers and Missing Data

Only one respondent's survey showed more than 10% missing values, and this survey was removed (final N= 292). For cases whose cells showed less than 10% missing values (13 cases), we checked whether the missing values followed a random pattern and concluded that this was the case (α=0.05). Following Hair *et al.* (2010), the missing values were replaced with the mean of the variable. The respondents were also screened for outliers. The anomaly index reported by SPSS indicated the non-existence of outliers at both univariate and multivariate levels. Further, to assess the appropriateness of data for analysis, G*Power software was employed to calculate minimum sample size (Erdfelder *et al.*, 2009). Since the results identified a minimum sample of 92 to obtain a power of 0.80 (for $\propto$=0.05 and f^2=0.15), our sample is larger than the minimum sample size required.

3.4. Multicollinearity Analysis and Common Method and Non-Response Biases

To minimize the possibility of common method bias (CMB) (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003), steps were taken to prevent respondents from guessing the study question or model and thus from skewing their answers due to desirability bias. Explained and explanatory variables were placed in different sections of the questionnaire, items were not grouped by scale, and varied response formats were used in Likert-type scales (for example, *totally disagree – totally agree*; *not at all – completely; strongly disagree – strongly agree*). Furthermore, respondents were assured that their responses would remain completely anonymous. Moreover, pilot surveys and experts' opinions helped to refine the instrument and to remove ambiguity in questionnaire items that might bias respondents in any way.

Although procedural approaches will not eliminate CMB, they can help to reduce it (Flynn *et al.*, 2018). Various statistical measures were used ex post to determine the possible extent of CMB. The first was Harman's one-factor test (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986), which showed that the first factor explained less than 13% of the variance, with the other 87% distributed evenly among the remaining factors. As this test has received a lot of criticism, a second test - developed by Williams *et al.* (2003) - was performed. A common method factor was included in the AMOS model, whose indicators included all indicators of the principal constructs (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003; Williams *et al.*, 2003). The variance of each indicator substantively explained by the principal construct and by the method was also calculated, following Liang *et al.* (2007) and Matzler *et al.* (2016). The average substantively-explained variance of the indicators was 0.914, while the average method-based variance was 0.07. In addition, most method factor loadings were insignificant. We can dismiss CMB as a problem due to the low value obtained and insignificance of the method variance.

In addition, following Chien *et al.*, (2021), responses of the late respondents were compared to those of the early respondents to assess non-response bias. The t-test showed no significant differences in variables between early and late respondents.

Finally, to ensure that data are not affected by multicollinearity, the variance inflation factors (VIFs) and tolerance were calculated for each variable. According to Theil (1971), serious problems of multicollinearity occur when VIF values are higher than 10 and tolerance values lower than 0.1, whereas VIFs below 5 and tolerance values higher than 0.2 are acceptable.

As Table 2 shows, the results for VIF and tolerance support the conclusion that multicollinearity is not a problem in the model.

Table 2. VIF and tolerance values

Variables	VIF	Tolerance
HPSTF	2.082	0.480
HPTRA	2.201	0.454
HPJDS	2.098	0.477
HPAPP	2.230	0.448
HPPAR	1.980	0.505
SERVL	4.215	0.237
WENGVI	4.340	0.230
WENGDE	4.288	0.233
WENGAB	1.273	0.786
Type of contract	1.026	0.974
Employee´s gender	1.059	0.944
Manager´s gender	1.068	0.936

4. Results

4.1. Measurement Model

This study adopted the two-step approach recommended by Schumacker and Lomax (2016), which consists first of evaluating the measurement model and then testing the structural model. SPSS 22 and AMOS 26 were used to analyze the data. The measurement model was assessed through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

4.1.1. Exploratory factor analysis. The results emerging from the exploratory factor analysis produced ten factors. All constructs had an eigenvalue >1.0 (from 1.150 to 12.733). The emerged ten factors collectively accounted for 76.491% of the variance. Additionally, KMO measure of sampling adequacy was 0.919. KMO values between 0.8 and 1 means that the sampling is adequate (Safavi & Bouzari, 2020). Bartlett's test of sphericity was 8304.440.

4.1.2. Confirmatory Factor analysis. It was used to evaluate the reliability and validity of the scales. The results show that all items significantly loaded on their respective constructs except for Servl1, Servl5, Servl6, Servl7, Extr1, Wengde3, and Wengab1. To remove these indicators, the single-step procedure described by Boomsma (2000) was followed. Here, it is necessary to mention that according to MacKenzie, Podsakoff, and Podsakoff, (2011), for reflective constructs the omission of some items does not affect its domain due to the retained indicators represent the conceptual domain of the constructs. Widely-used fit indicators were employed to evaluate the full measurement model. As NFI, CFI, IFI, AGFI, and GFI produced values above the cut-off of 0.90 and a RMSEA value lower than 0.08 (Byrne, 2001), we can conclude that the measurement model indicates good model fit. The model fits the data sufficiently for our case, as we obtained the following fit indicators ($\chi 2$=1135.729,

df=419, *p*=0.321, RMSEA=0.050, NFI=0.933, CFI=0.941, IFI=0.941, GFI=0.931, AGFI=0.927).

In addition, to ensure that the hypothesized measurement model is the most suitable model, three alternative measurement models were estimated and their fit indicators compared (Rojo *et al*., 2016). The first alternative model assumes that WE is a single one-dimensional construct and that the other scales remain as in the original measurement model. We obtain the following fit indices ($\chi 2$=1159.935, df=436, RMSEA=0.186, NFI=0.816, CFI=0.823, IFI=0.823, GFI=0.814, AGFI=0.810). The second alternative model assumes that HPWS is a single one-dimensional construct and the other constructs remain the same. This model produces the following fit indices ($\chi 2$=1318.983, df=449, RMSEA=0.269, NFI=0.599, CFI=0.604, IFI=0.603, GFI=0.598, AGFI=0.595). The third alternative is a combination of the two preceding models. It models both WE and HPWS, respectively, as one-dimensional constructs. This model obtains the following fit indices ($\chi 2$=1342.356, df=458, RMSEA=0.270, NFI=0.584, CFI=0.589, IFI=0.589, GFI=0.583, AGFI=0.580). As the results show, the proposed measurement model is the most plausible representation of the data, as the alternative models show substantially worse global fit indices and these indices worsen as more variables are combined. These results help to confirm reasonable discriminant validity, without jeopardizing their ultimate formal confirmation.

The Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) of all constructs exceeded a critical value of 0.70, suggesting that the constructs had acceptable reliability (see Table 3). In addition, Fornell and Larcker (1981) propose that the values for average variance extracted (AVE) should exceed the convergent validity obtained by 0.5. Table 3 shows that all constructs fulfill the criteria these authors suggest, demonstrating the presence of convergent validity.

Table 3. Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model (First-Order Constructs)

Items **(Cronbach α)**	**Mean**	**S.D.**	**Skew**	**Kurtosis**	**Factor loadings**	**t-value**	**R^2**	**Composite reliability**	**Average variance extracted**
HPSTF (staffing) (α:0.942)									
Hpstf1	4.440	1.888	-0.309	-0.942	0.903	a	0.816	0.945	0.813
Hpstf2	4.440	1.916	-0.366	-0.996	0.763	16.602	0.581		
Hpstf3	4.340	1.796	-0.230	-0.917	0.970	31.073	0.941		
Hpstf4	4.270	1.841	-0.208	-1.026	0.955	31.656	0.912		
HPTRA (training) (α:0.904)									
Hptra1	3.940	1.900	-0.100	-1.192	0.722	a	0.521		

Hptra2	3.420	2.037	0.249	-1.273	0.858	15.044	0.736	0.905	0.707
Hptra3	3.340	2.052	0.306	-1.274	0.898	15.612	0.806		
Hptra4	3.130	1.989	0.445	-1.103	0.874	15.075	0.765		
HPJDS (job description) (α:0.905)									
Hpjds1	4.670	1.872	-0.540	-0.808	0.760	a	0.578	0.909	0.770
Hpjds2	4.390	1.998	-0.331	-1.085	0.912	16.536	0.832		
Hpjds3	4.250	1.955	-0.210	-1.102	0.949	15.443	0.901		
HPAPP (appraisal) (α:0.926)									
Hpapp1	3.530	1.978	0.119	-1.232	0.929	a	0.863	0.929	0.814
Hpapp2	3.470	1.874	0.160	-1.084	0.963	31.456	0.927		
Hpapp3	3.660	1.881	0.062	-1.105	0.807	19.651	0.651		
HPPAR (participation) (α:0.898)									
Hppar1	4.030	2.115	-0.117	-1.347	0.810	a	0.655	0.901	0.644
Hppar2	4.540	1.801	-0.365	-0.756	0.823	16.917	0.677		
Hppar3	4.820	1.901	-0.536	-0.858	0.904	20.036	0.818		
Hppar4	5.040	1.947	-0.722	-0.673	0.792	15.214	0.628		
SERVL (servant leadership) (α:0.857)									
Servl1	Dropped								
Servl l2	3.620	1.882	0.029	-1.172	0.756	a	0.585	0.862	0.676
Servl l3	4.090	2.181	-0.156	-1.375	0.781	14.787	0.611		
Servl l4	3.730	1.854	-0.043	-0.985	0.921	13.292	0.848		
Servl l5	Dropped								
Servl l6	Dropped								
Servl l7	Dropped								
EXTR (extra-role behavior) (α:0.870)									
Extr1	6.380	0.904	-1.821	3.803	0.750	a	0.562	0.877	0.642
Extr2	6.380	0.854	-1.453	1.827	0.893	10.541	0.797		
Extr3	6.270	1.054	-1.785	3.597	0.791	8.807	0.626		
Extr4	6.110	1.111	-1.424	2.165	0.763	8.941	0.583		
Extr5	Dropped								
WENGVI (work engagement-vigor) (α:0.886)									
Wengvi1	4.940	1.622	-0.773	0.141	0.959	a	0.920		

Wengvi2	5.050	1.576	-0.814	0.269	0.909	22.242	0.827	0.898	0.749
Wengvi3	4.340	1.828	-0.482	-0.715	0.709	13.683	0.502		
WENGDE (work engagement-dedication) (α:0.929)									
Wengde1	4.560	1.794	-0.531	-0.577	0.869	a	0.755	0.923	0.858
Wengde2	4.410	1.881	-0.512	-0.720	0.980	13.350	0.851		
Wengde3	Dropped								
WENGAB (work engagement-absorption) (α:0.834)									
Wengab1	Dropped								
Wengab2	5.750	1.183	-1.015	1.071	0.958	a	0.818	0.848	0.739
Wengab3	5.800	1.082	-0.827	0.387	0.749	10.423	0.562		

CFA was performed to demonstrate the multidimensionality and reliability of the model's two second-order constructs, WE and HPWSs. As Table 4 shows, all results guarantee reliability of the scales used.

Table 4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Second-Order Constructs

Factors	Standardized parameters	t-values	R^2	Composite reliability	Averag varian extract
Work engagement (α: 0.908)					
Wengvi	0.948	a	0.899	0.903	0.759
Wengde	0.938	11.351	0.881		
Wengab	0.707	7.612	0.557		
High performance work systems (α: 0.949)					
HPSTF	0.759	a	0.576		
HPTRA	0.799	11.197	0.638	0.878	0.592
HPJDS	0.791	10.347	0.626		
HPAPP	0.788	11.935	0.621		
HPPAR	0.710	11.271	0.559		

Discriminant validity of the constructs was assessed according to Voorhees, Brady, Calantone, and Ramirez (2016). Firstly, Fornell and Larcker's (1981) procedure was used. As all AVE values are greater than the correlations of the constructs, the results confirm discriminant validity (see Table 5). Secondly, the HTMT ratio was calculated for each pair of constructs (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). As Table 6 shows, the HTMT ratio is lower than 0.85 for all cases, also indicating discriminant validity.

Table 5. Fornell and Larcker Criterion

	HPSTF	HPTRA	HPJDS	HPAPP	HPPAR	SERVL	EXTR	WENGVI	WENGDE	WENGAB
HPSTF	**0.902**									
HPTRA	0.636**	**0.841**								
HPJDS	0.553**	0.581**	**0.877**							
HPAPP	0.578**	0.609**	0.620**	**0.902**						
HPPAR	0.524**	0.498**	0.548**	0.535**	**0.802**					
SERVL	0.458**	0.476**	0.443**	0.473**	0.489**	**0.823**				
EXTR	0.073	0.040	0.043	0.050	0.269**	0.074	**0.801**			
WENGVI	0.485**	0.413**	0.451**	0.508**	0.519**	0.435**	0.247**	**0.865**		
WENGDE	0.494**	0.483**	0.461**	0.510**	0.511**	0.463**	0.195**	0.801**	**0.858**	
WENGAB	0.267**	0.234**	0.221**	0.231**	0.298**	0.199**	0.288**	0.440**	0.426**	**0.860**

** significance level 0.01

Table 6. HTMT Ratio

	HPSTF	HPTRA	HPJDS	HPAPP	HPPAR	SERVL	EXTR	WENGVI	WENGDE	WENGAB
HPSTF										
HPTRA	0.692									
HPJDS	0.599	0.645								
HPAPP	0.619	0.667	0.677							
HPPAR	0.567	0.552	0.605	0.584						
SERVL	0.515	0.547	0.506	0.538	0.555					
EXTR	0.081	0.049	0.047	0.056	0.308	0.084				
WENGVI	0.529	0.460	0.502	0.560	0.576	0.501	0.279			
WENGDE	0.528	0.526	0.501	0.550	0.558	0.524	0.213	0.843		
WENGAB	0.301	0.269	0.253	0.261	0.343	0.237	0.341	0.510	0.483	

4.2. Structural Model (Hypothesis Testing)

The structural model (like the measurement model) was estimated using maximum likelihood (ML) estimation with the correlation matrix as input data. Skewness was analyzed to test for normality of the data. As can be confirmed from Table 3, the skewness values are below 3.00, demonstrating that non-normality is not an issue (Kline, 2011). The guidelines by Guide and Ketokivi (2015) were followed to evaluate the model's global fit:

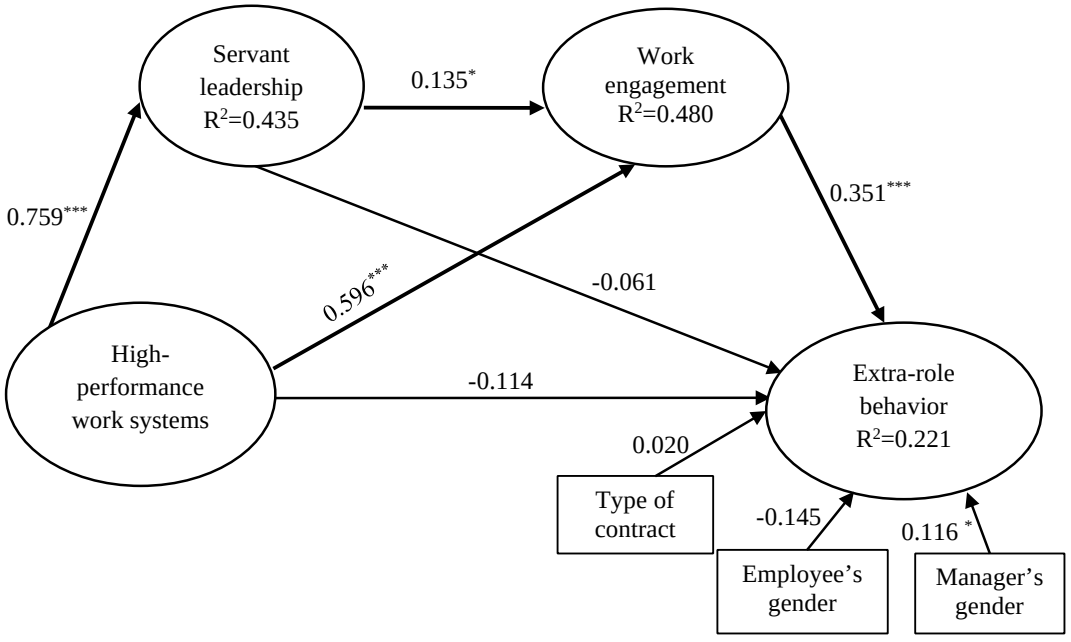
(1) To assess fit positively, *models must be based on a robust, established body of theory* with considerable/extensive explanatory power. Our literature review establishes the theoretical foundation required.

(2) *Calculate and evaluate χ2*. The *χ2* value (*χ2*=1083.361; d.f.=546; p=0.428) shows good fit between the data and the model, since there are no statistically significant differences between the predicted and the observed covariance matrices (Guide & Ketokivi, 2015).

(3) *Report multiple indices of global model fit.* All indices show above-cutoff values (NFI=0.904; NNFI=0.953; CFI=0.958; IFI=0.958; RMSEA=0.049; 90% IC RMSEA=0.043-0.055), demonstrating accurate model fit.

(4) *Examine model components.* Figure 2 reports the R^2 value for each variable explained, and the standardized parameters. The values obtained are congruent with the fit indices.

Figure 2. Results of the Model



***significantly different from 0 at 0.001 level
** significantly different from 0 at 0.05 level
* significantly different from 0 at 0.10 level

The bootstrap approach was used to test for mediation effects, as this method has been shown to evaluate mediation more accurately than Baron and Kenny's test (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Mediation is established when indirect effects are statistically significant, and no zero value should be included in the confidence interval (Zhao *et al.*, 2010). Table 7 shows the standardized indirect bias-corrected bootstrap estimates with a 95% confidence interval using 5000 bootstrap samples.

Table 7. Mediation Analysis

	Standardized estimate	*p value*, two tailed	95% Bc CI	
HPWSs → Work engagement → Extra-role behavior				
Direct effect	-0.114	n.s.	-0.479-0.334	H4: not support
Indirect effect	0.230	0.009	0.061-0.601	H5: supported *(full mediation*
Total effect	0.116	0.042	0.074-0.326	
HPWSs → Servant leadership → Work engagement				
Direct effect	0.596	0.001	0.315-0.852	H2: supported
Indirect effect	0.102	0.084	0.088-0.271	H3: supported *(partial mediati*
Total effect	0.698	0.000	0.518-0.811	
HPWSs → Servant leadership → Extra-role behavior				
Direct effect	-0.114	n.s	-0.479-0.334	
Indirect effect	0.048	n.s	-0.051-0.174	H6: not support
Total effect	-0.066	n.s	-0.140-0.353	
HPWSs → Servant leadership → Work engagement → Extra-role behavior				
	0.036	0.041	0.010-0.135	H7: supported

As H1 anticipated, HPWSs have a strong positive effect on both SL (β=0.759, $p < 0.001$) and WE (β=0.596, $p < 0.001$), confirming H2. SL mediates the impact of HPWSs on WE, as H3 predicted (indirect effect β HPWSs-SL-WE=0.102, $p < 0.010$).

Contrary to H4, HPWSs do not have a direct effect on employees' ERB but do show an indirect effect through WE (indirect effect β HPWSs WE-ERB =0.230, $p < 0.05$) (H5 confirmed). Nor does the employee's ERB through SL (H6 not confirmed). The relationship between HPWSs and ERB is, however, serially mediated by SL and WE, supporting H7 (β=0.036, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, of the three control variables considered, only supervisor's

gender was significant; the results show that male gender of the supervisor positively impacts employees' ERB.

4.3. Robustness Testing

To assess the validity and robustness of the results obtained from the SEM model, the research model was tested using an alternative methodology (Aguiar-Quintana *et al.,* 2020). Specifically, the research model was evaluated using regression analysis via the PROCESS method developed by Hayes (2013). Table 8 shows these results, which are consistent with those obtained through SEM. Based on a bootstrapping with 10,000 subsamples, Table 9 shows the indirect effects estimated and the 95% bias corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals for those effects. All the indirect effects are significant and positive, except for the impact of HPWSs on ERB through SL (the confidence interval contains zero).

Table 8. Regression Coefficients, Standard errors, and Model Summary Information for the Serial Multiple Mediator Model

Consequent									
	M_1 (SERVL)			**M_2 (WE)**			**Y (EXTR)**		
Antecedent	**Coeff.**	**SE**	***p***	**Coeff.**	**SE**	***p***	**Coeff.**	**SE**	***p***
X(HPWS)	0.716	0.059	0.000	0.479	0.051	0.000	-0.029	0.047	n.s.
M_1 (SERVL)	-	-	-	0.106	0.413	0.010	-0.020	0.034	n.s.
M_2 (WE)	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.208	0.047	0.000
Constant	0.878	0.256	0.000	2.611	0.184	0.000	5.442	0.193	0.000
	R^2= 0.336			**R^2**= 0.388			**R^2**= 0.278		

M_1: first mediator; M_2: second mediator

Table 9. Indirect Effects

Indirect effects	**Boot SE**	**95% Bc CI**
HPWS→ WE → EXTR	0.168	(0.089-0.255)
HPWS → SERVL → EXTR	-0.024	(-0.099-0.055)
HPWS → SERVL → WE → EXTR	0.013	(0.005-0.057)
Total indirect effects: 0.171	0.052	(0.069-0.272)

5. Discussion and Research Implications

The aim of this study was two-fold: 1) to disentangle whether HPWSs encourage the emergence of SL; and 2) to analyze the impact of both HPWSs and SL on hotel employees' WE and ERB.

Concerning the first objective, the research fills an important gap recently highlighted in the management literature. The systematic review by Eva, Robin, Sendjaya, van Dierendonck, and Liden (2019) identified three distinct phases in SL research: an initial phase that focused on construct development and conceptual clarifications; a second phase that developed measures of SL; and a current third phase that focuses on the underlying mechanisms of and relationships between SL and its outcomes. The review argued that this third phase requires further research to understand the antecedents, mediating mechanisms, and boundary conditions of SL. In response, the present study's results confirm that specific combinations of HR practices, such as HPWSs, can create a favorable environment for encouraging managers to adopt certain leadership styles, such as SL. Consistent with Organizational Identification theory, the findings show that service organizations with an HPWSs policy can inspire servant behaviors in their members. To the authors' knowledge, this is the first study to posit HPWSs as an antecedent of SL, thereby filling a gap in the literature by identifying *what leads to SL in organizations*.

Second, because hotel service relies on the attitudes and skills of personnel, WE is more meaningful in the hospitality industry than in non-service industries. This study sheds light on several mechanisms to boost WE among hospitality workers. Congruent with Social Exchange theory (Blau, 1964), the study results demonstrate that implementing HPWSs enables the organization to foster higher WE levels in its members, who will develop emotional bonds with the company when they feel well taken care of. These results confirm previous findings in this direction (Alfes *et al.*, 2013; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2016). The results also lend credence to the hypothesis that hospitality workers' WE increases when they feel that their superior puts their needs ahead of his or hers. These results accord with those of De Clercq, Bouckenooghe, Raja, and Matsyborska (2014), who argue that "servant leaders stimulate WE by creating an environment that promotes psychological safety" (p. 201). This research demonstrates that servant leaders stimulate others by giving them purpose, contributing to development of employees' pride in their work and organization, and influencing employee WE "through inspiring, connecting, and strengthening their employees" (Decuypere & Schaufeli, 2020: p.70).

The most interesting results of this study are probably those that uncover the mediating mechanisms necessary to boost employees' ERB.

Some authors view the HPWSs-employee behavior relationship as a "black box" (Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020), and controversy exists over the intervening or mediating variables through which an organizational variable (such as HPWSs) indirectly affects individual outcomes (such as ERB). Prior research has highlighted the role of individual variables such as job embeddedness (Karatepe & Vatankhah, 2014) and WE (Karatepe 2013; Kloutsiniotis & Mihail, 2020) in the relationship between HPWSs and customer-service-oriented behavior. Other authors propose organizational or team context variables (such as

the role of supervisory support or fulfillment of teams' psychological contracts (Schereuder *et al.*, 2020) as crucial to achieving higher performance and more proactive behavior among workers. In light of these mixed results, our results shed some light on this "black box" by identifying the sequential mechanisms (SL and WE) through which HPWSs generate ERB.

In this study, full mediation was obtained in a serial model, indicating that HPWSs influence ERB only when two conditions are fulfilled: the leader displays servant leadership, and hospitality employees are highly engaged. Social Exchange theory suggests that perception of HPWSs results in direct change in employees' behavior, specifically in increased willingness to outperform. (When workers feel indebted to the company's HR policies, they tend to reciprocate with extra effort in their performance.) The results of this study challenge this logic, however, by demonstrating that implementation of HPWSs is insufficient to trigger ERB in hospitality employees. The study findings indicate that the leader's role - specifically the leader's servant behavior - is crucial in promoting the engaged state in employees that subsequently results in ERB.

The results of this investigation suggest that HPWSs *per se* are not enough to foster exceptional employee performance. Rather, hospitality companies that wish employees to give their utmost when serving customers must meet two conditions: a) HPWSs must generate a favorable servant climate that supports SL in leaders, and b) the SL behaviors must engage employees. Only when these two conditions concur are employees likely to display ERB. This study thus advances the human resources and hospitality literature by unveiling two key variables (SL and WE) indispensable to motivating hospitality employees to display superior service.

Bandura's (1969a) Social Learning theory explains how individuals learn by observing a role model's behavior. This theory suggests that employees who observe servant attitudes in their leaders will replicate those behaviors by being more service-oriented. Contrary to our prediction, the mere presence of either appropriate HPWSs or a participatory leadership style such as SL does not guarantee that workers will perform outstanding service-oriented behavior. This study demonstrates that employees must reach a positive cognitive state of mind, such as WE, before they will display the desired behaviors.

The study's most significant theoretical contribution is thus its conceptual and empirical demonstration that HPWSs influence employee ERB indirectly by increasing employee WE levels, and that this influence occurs sequentially via two important mediators: SL and WE.

5.1. Practical Implications

The hospitality industry has traditionally been characterized as very hierarchical, with decision power concentrated in managers. Substantial parts of the hospitality industry worldwide are managed by traditional leadership styles (mostly autocratic) in which managers are more inclined to use authoritative styles. Øgaard *et al.* (2008) have highlighted the need for better leadership in the hospitality industry. Traditional authoritarian leadership

styles are no longer well received in this sector, especially by new generations of workers (Kong *et al.,* 2016). Service firms should endeavor not only to recruit supervisors with more other-focused leadership skills, but also to train their current managers to embrace SL qualities.

Namasivayam *et al.* (2014) noted the importance of ensuring that hospitality managers understand the extent to which their leadership style – and, more importantly, specific leadership behaviors – influence employees' outcomes positively. The present study's findings call for SL to maximize WE – and consequently employees' ERB performance.

The hospitality is plagued by the perennial concerns of poor working conditions such as low salary, irregular work shifts, and heavy workload. The industry continues to face high labor turnover. HPWSs can provide a solution to attract and retain talented employees. A thorough staffing process helps to consider candidates' fit within the team and detect proper alignment of the employee's values with those of the company; a visual career pathway encourages employee motivation to stay; inter-departmental training and work opportunities in different countries, and formal training in customer service skills and emerging hotel technology can improve employees' customer-orientation. It is also important to plan fair shift rotation with sufficient breaks and a reasonable, objective payment system that rewards excellent performance.

In Spanish hospitality, most-qualified workers are frequently penalized, their talents rewarded much less (Casado-Díaz & Simón, 2016). Talent and extraordinary performance must be praised in hotel settings to avoid brain drain. But how? Hotels could implement a variable-pay salary component tied to performance (e.g., special bonuses for "employee of the month," voted on by colleagues and customers) or to employees' capabilities (remunerating not only the position but also the employee's unique skills [language mastery, education level, etc.]). Employee participation must be encouraged through more empowering practices within the department: allowing basic front-line decisions such as invoice amendments, letting employees grant some upgrades and special amenities depending on the guest. Such empowerment will surely improve the hotel's daily operations and service performance, by, for instance, speeding service recovery procedures.

Implementation of HPWSs is not sufficient to achieve ERB. Although the mutual gains perspective has traditionally suggested that both employees and employers benefit from HPWSs, Mariappanadar (2014) provides a different view, indicating that HPWSs may not be beneficial - and may even be psychosocially harmful - to employees, as such practices lead to more stressful work due to the high level of performance expected. The results of the full mediation model obtained in the present study suggest that these practices must be implemented in the context of servant-engaging behaviors from leaders if they are to motivate hospitality employees to exert extra effort.

Hospitality organizations should also develop working conditions propitious both to inspiring servant behaviors in their managers and to raising WE levels in their workforce. This study argues that HPWSs may be instrumental in achieving these results. If hospitality companies seek to encourage more ERB among their workforce – and to build on a HPWS structure to

do so – leaders' servant behaviors that generate a work climate and engage the workforce are definitely the answer.

6. Limitations and Future Research Avenues

Since this study is cross-sectional, conclusions about causality cannot be drawn.

As this study positioned analysis at individual level, the study variables were best assessed via self-report (e.g., perceived behavior of the leader, WE level of employee). Although recommended procedures to avoid CMB were followed, future studies should measure different variables using different respondents at different time points to validate the model variables (e.g., supervisors rating employees' ERB over a different time lag).

Incorporating other novel leadership styles such as moral or ethical leadership could also enrich understanding of which leadership style best engages employees to outperform at work.

Furthermore, the positive benefits of SL may be more pronounced when other organizational contextual factors and interpersonal characteristics are measured. For example, it would be interesting to explore whether some personal characteristics of leaders - even birth order (Campbell *et al.*, 2019)- are important for leaders' embrace of certain leadership styles. Other types of employee behavior and performance, such as professionalism (Cheng & Wong, 2015), could also be studied as consequences of SL style.

Some authors, such as Madera et al. (2017) and Gui et al. (2020), have observed the effect of national culture on leadership, noting that leadership values can vary among countries. In view of this finding, future cross-cultural research is thus encouraged. Re-examining the model proposed in this study using data from other cultural and industrial contexts could help to verify generalizability of the results. Moreover, since hospitality is a 24/7 sector with frequent interaction between customers and workers, it could be interesting to test whether similar outputs are obtained in industries other than the hotel sector.

These limitations notwithstanding, the study findings contribute to the HRM and hospitality literatures by partially illuminating the influence of HPWSs on leaders' and employees' behavior. It is hoped that these results will inspire other researchers to develop further studies highlighting the importance of employees' positive psychological outcomes in the hospitality industry.

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