ISCTE ◈ Business School
Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEADERSHIP MORAL DISEN-GAGEMENT AND BURNOUT: THE MEDIATION EFFECT OF PRESENTEEISM CLIMATE AND THE MODERATION EFFECT OF CONTRACT TYPES

José Gonçalo Gonçalves Tenda Corrêa d'Oliveira

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of

Master in Human Resources Management & Organizational Consultancy

Supervisor:

Professor Aristides I. Ferreira, Assistant Prof., ISCTE Business School, Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour

Co-supervisor:

Ana Catarina Leal, PhD Candidate, ISCTE Business School, Department of Human Resources and Organizational Behaviour

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- Spine example -

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"All that is gold does not glitter,

Not all those who wander are lost."

– J. R. R. Tolkien

Resumo

A seguinte investigação procura estudar as implicações relativas o Descomprometimento Moral dos líderes, devido à crescente preocupação com a mesma na indústria hoteleira, bem como verificar as consequências respetivas de uma relação com sintomas de *burnout*, que podem deteriorar mais as condições de trabalho. Este estudo procura também enriquecer um campo de pesquisa ainda relativamente inexplorado, particularmente dando notoriedade aos efeitos negativos do Descomprometimento Moral dos líderes, que seguramente surgirão por se trabalhar em ambientes nestas circunstâncias. Estudando dados de 129 colaboradores de diversos hotéis ao longo de cinco dias de trabalho consecutivos, espera-se que estes diários venham a ser um bom contributo para decisões estratégicas futuras. Vários testes foram efetuados, incluindo o uso da extensão PROCESS desenvolvida por Hayes, para averiguar as limitações do Descomprometimento Moral dos líderes, mais concretamente quando relacionado com os efeitos de *burnout* através da mediação de clima de presenteeismo. Adicionalmente, é também testado se os tipos de contrato podem moderar esta relação, sendo que é esperado que os contratos permanentes possam atenuar os efeitos de *burnout*. Os resultados obtidos nesta dissertação oferecem algum suporte para as hipóteses propostas, pela significância que houve relativamente à relação entre Descomprometimento Moral dos líderes e *burnout*, em duas instâncias distintas: uma mediação através de clima de presenteeismo, e uma mediação moderada através dos tipos de contrato. São necessárias mais investigações para fortalecer as descobertas deste estudo, apesar de já se revelar a urgência em desenvolver melhores procedimentos relativamente às sinergias entre líderes e colaboradores.

Palavras-chave: Descomprometimento moral dos líderes, *burnout*, clima de presenteeismo, tipos de contrato

Abstract

The following research seeks to study the implications regarding Leadership Moral Disengagement (LMD), as it is an emerging concern in hotel management operations, as well as verify the subsequent effects of a relationship with burnout related symptoms, which may worsen overall work conditions. This study also aims to enrich a field of research that is still relatively unexplored, particularly raising awareness to the negative effects of LMD, which surely emerge from working in such environments. By studying data acquired regarding 129 employees from several hotels throughout the course of five consecutive working days, it is expected that these diaries should become quite insightful in future strategic decisions. Numerous tests and analyses were performed, including the usage of the PROCESS extension developed by Hayes, in order to assess the limitations of Leadership Moral Disengagement, more explicitly when related to burnout effects through the mediation of presenteeism climate. Furthermore, it is also tested whether contract types may moderate this relationship, since it is expected that more permanent contracts may attenuate the effects of burnout. The results found in this paper offer some support and insight for the proposed hypotheses, meaning that there was significant evidence regarding the relationship between LMD and burnout, on two separate instances: a mediation through presenteeism climate and a moderated mediation through contract types. Further research is required to strengthen the findings of this dissertation, even though results already reveal an urgent need for better procedures regarding the synergies between leaders and employees.

Keywords: leadership moral disengagement, burnout, presenteeism climate, contract types

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Introduction

The growth of occupational stress and the emergence of burnout related symptoms in all sorts of organizational environments has been cause for great concern in recent times. From the lack of work-life balance policies to never-ending shifts, several issues have been pointed out as the ones responsible for this crisis, but there's no sole culprit in this endeavour. In fact, it was only recently that burnout was classified as a disease by the World Health Organization, becoming part of the 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) ('WHO', 2019).

The hospitality sector was chosen for the purpose of this study due to a series of conditions that synergize greatly with the variables required. Due to a constant escalation of competitivity levels amongst employees as well as clients' expectations for higher quality of service, the overall strain on organizations trying to keep up with the industry has become almost unbearable, and naturally the consequences fall upon the teams working to satisfy such demanding customers, and also the employers trying to keep a workforce with the ability to do so. As such, if employees find themselves in a situation where they're not receiving enough support to deal with daily operations, stress levels will surely rise, as the workload is considered one of the most common stressors in this industry (O'Neill & Davis, 2011).

The present study seeks to expose a relatively new problem that may be worsening working conditions in the hotel industry, by targeting leaders, managers and supervisors within these settings, and consequently prove that the lack of care and support by these entities may have dire results in ongoing operations. This concept is called Leadership Moral Disengagement (LMD), a branch of the original notion developed by several authors (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996; Moore & Detert, 2012), which will be studied in order to check whether the lack of proper leadership skills may be affecting burnout levels within hotels.

However, because the complete and utter disregard from social and personal moral standards doesn't happen hastily, nor does it happen in similar fashions, all research made thus far still isn't enough to explain the full extent of this issue in some contexts, namely the synergy amongst morally disengaged leaders and their employees. As such, this study will strive to unveil the impacts of such mechanisms on employees, through the actions of their organization leaders.

Ever since modern organizations began to realize just how important it was to invest in their employees, a greater concern has arisen for their well-being and safety while performing their assigned tasks. As such, employees themselves may be compelled to disregard these basic needs for a number of secondary reasons, simply because they believe they might suffer severe consequences if they don't work regularly.

This concept known as presenteeism climate has gained notoriety recently as well (Demerouti, Le Blanc, Bakker, Schaufeli, & Hox, 2009; Ferreira, da Costa Ferreira, Cooper, & Oliveira, 2018), and it relies on the idea that people may attend work as usual despite being unwell or unfit to do so, regardless of the nature of their condition. In other words, presenteeism climate is an organizational behaviour phenomenon that links a lack of productivity and performance in employees due to detrimental conditions they may sustain, either physical or psychological (Ferreira & Martinez, 2012). Studies show that employees in precarious circumstances show higher chances of reporting this condition (Agudelo-Suárez, Benavides, Felt, Ronda-Pérez, Vives-Cases, García, 2010), which may help support the relevance of presenteeism climate as a mediator in this context, not only because LMD may create more suitable environments for presenteeism climate to set, but also because the conjunction of both may induce or develop further any symptoms of burnout in employees.

Finally, yet another proposition is made to enrich the prospects of this study, which relies on a comparison between contract types within organizations (more accurately within hotels, due to their unique operational settings), serving as a moderator in the relationship between LMD and burnout. This comparison is expected to reveal a clear distinction between the effects of LMD on different sorts of contracts, and how these subsequently affect employees developing burnout symptoms. The types of contracts present in this study are split into two main categories: precarious contracts, which encompass contracts of a temporary nature, and permanent contracts, which refer to employees who are bound by contracts without a definite term or termination date.

These two opposite notions may contribute in a multitude of ways, on separate instances, as it is expected that precarious contracts should have some sort of impact hazardous conditions that may increase the chances of new symptoms appearing in employees, as well as permanent contracts may indicate some connection between leaders and their roles within the company and the tendency to morally disengage.

Altogether, the main focus of this paper can be described as the correlation between LMD and burnout, including the roles of presenteeism climate in mediating such a relationship, as well as contract types simultaneously engaging in a moderated mediation. As such, the following question was formulated:

To what extent does moral disengagement in leaders influence burnout symptoms in employees, and to what extent is such a relationship mediated through presenteeism climate as well as moderated by contract types?

Considering this statement as the basis for this paper, all the following data, analyses and results will seek to add some degree of empiric significance to the vastness of investigations already developed in each of these topics. It will also be reported whether the implications of the inherent relationships are relevant towards the circumstances regarding burnout.

Theoretical Framework

First and foremost, it is imperative to raise awareness on what possible boundaries might exist as well as understand the context in which any research is done, since every research study conducted is bound to have some degree of limitations (Ioannidis, 2007). Hence, the core subjects in question are being developed exclusively on the hospitality industry considering its unique features, more accurately on a cluster of hotels belonging to two different hotel chains, and therefore sharing strategic relevance to any results that might arise from this dissertation.

As such, in order to effectively unearth as much information as possible on all subjects, different models will be developed for that purpose. Starting with Bandura's mechanisms of moral disengagement (1996), the finality is to enlighten the premises of this study regarding the origins of immoral behaviours, and to verify whether results from these actions have impact on other variables. Simultaneously, the Job Demands-Resource model plays an essential role in this study, not

only due to its original purpose of seeking and preserving employees' overall well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), but also because of previous studies focused on unveiling the negative synergies that are associated with burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001, Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005).

Taking this into account, those findings may help further support the role of presenteeism climate as a mediator between moral disengagement amongst leaders and burnout, as it has been previously studied how leadership positions can influence this phenomenon (Ferreira, Martinez, Cooper & Gui, 2015; Mach, Ferreira, Martinez, Lisowskaia, Dagher, & Perez-Nebra, 2018) and also how work environments displaying symptoms of presenteeism can evolve into burnout related situations (Ferreira & Martinez, 2012).

Additionally, all variables will display some level of contextualization within the boundaries of the hotel industry, depending on the level of research already made in each case, in an attempt of not only validating the settings selected for this study, but also to verify the overall depth of research made, or lack of it.

Leadership Moral Disengagement (LMD)

Immoral behaviours such as fraud, corruption, or even simpler forms of neglect, have grown to become a major threat to the survival of organizations of all dimensions in recent times. The ability to detach one's rooted moral standards and consequently act upon deviant manners is inherently associated with the term Moral Disengagement, a concept which has been thoroughly developed by numerous scholars from a plethora of academic backgrounds, such as Bandura (1986, 1999).

As an example, Moore (2015) attempts to summarize Bandura's set of eight different cognitive mechanisms, which may be referred to as moral justification, euphemistic labelling, advantageous comparison, displacement and diffusion of responsibility, distortion of consequences, dehumanization and attribution of blame. These mechanisms may illustrate why it becomes seemingly easier to start engaging in immoral actions without the feeling of distress, as they open pathways that distort previous notions of morality. Many of these mechanisms can be applied to the current study, to some extent, by creating a parallelism between the original meaning and the current perspective, ultimately providing a deeper insight on the impact of LMD in contemporary standards.

Bandura (1999) develops definitions for all these mechanisms, starting by describing moral justification as a way of indulging in injurious behaviours to others through the process of finding some sort of social or personal excuse that allows oneself to act without remorse, or even by giving a whole new meaning to such heinous acts. This means that, as long as violence has an apparently valid reason that supports it, mayhems will happen due to an illusion of permission or acceptance by one's peers or superiors. In other words, people will believe that vicious crimes like murder may, in fact, be justified by noble notions of self-defence, protection and peace.

Despite the seriousness of the previous matter, it may become less severe at the eyes of the perpetrators through the process of euphemistic labelling, which according to Gambino (1973) may come in different assortments, but the common ground lies with the idea that certain actions aren't as bad as they seem, because they are disguised as less impactful ones. One of them relies on the concept of "sanitizing euphemisms", which consists in the removal of any sensations of disgust or repugnance of atrocities, which can be done by calling murder a mere "waste" or naming the death of civilians as "collateral damage" if executed for military purposes. Moreover, other abhorrent circumstances can become aggravated because as they are perceived as seemingly clean actions, they will add further injury than if they were categorized as a vile crime (Diener, Dineen, Endresen, Beaman, & Fraser, 1975).

Another way of concealing these actions relies on comparing two terrible deeds and deeming one as virtuous or honourable in comparison to a more dreadful alternative, through the exploitation of the intrinsic principles of one faction and then find it as a reason to morally disengage and act accordingly, exemplified by the devastation of Vietnam depicted as a rescue of the native people by American troops from a deranged government (Bandura, 1999).

Regarding the concept of responsibility, it is possible in this setting to either displace it or diffuse it, which are attempts of relieving the wrongdoer from culpability and reduce their guilt in harmful scenarios by faulting other entities. Interestingly, these features are amongst those that better fit this study, due mainly to their connection with authority and the lack of morality associated in some displayed cases. Displacing responsibility basically entails the demeaning of one's actual portion of blame and placing it on orders given by a superior authority, leaving only a trail of compliance and obedience to the chain of command, in spite of all damages done in the meantime. Similarly, diffusing responsibility also implicitly reduces the awareness of personal levels of

liability, only this time by distributing it to a vast amount of people. By carrying out tasks that seem inoffensive enough in themselves, the general purpose of what such tasks contribute to gets easily lost, which births the idea that if "…*everyone is responsible, no one really feels responsible*." (Bandura, 1999).

Beyond acting wrongfully whilst feeling deprived of fault, one other perspective takes place when consequences aren't seen at all, creating yet another illusion that, somehow, all sorrow and grief is unreal because it is far from sight. In other words, as long as consequences aren't experienced by the offenders, they won't be able to identify the wrongs, or even acknowledge their existence, becoming unable to feel dismayed by what is truly occurring with others (Bandura, 1992).

Finally, we reach a stage where the very humanity of the employees is put in jeopardy with the purpose of easing the perpetrator's sense of self-reflection as well as the intrinsic feeling of shame after any mischievous deeds are done with intent to harm (Bandura, 1999). The lack of restraint when committing violent acts is partially due to what Kelman (1973) refers as a series of processes of dehumanization that essentially eradicate the identity of both victim and victimizer, as well as the sense of belonging to a community. By neglecting to recognize another fellow human being as such, it is conceivable to reject a number of people that are henceforth categorized as lesser creatures, more frequently due to religious, ethnic or racial reasons, and eventually removing any moral ties previously in effect. The allowance of such concepts to thrive lead to great disasters during war times, where an environment filled with fear and hatred towards a certain group of people branded as the "enemy" triggered reactions to threats that could potentially involve the killing of another.

Amidst these circumstances arises the last remaining mechanism, the attribution of blame, to some extent as a consequence of acts that may demand retribution. If an evil act is committed, the receiving end may counter in a stronger and intensified manner, justifying those actions as a mere response to a previous provocation. However, these justifications can serve as a permit to inflict great damage upon the victims, because they remind the victimizer that he had suffered in the first place to some degree, and therefore the victims are blameworthy (Bandura, 1999).

It is of great importance to mention the implications of this variable in the hotel industry, as it has started to become quite remarkable from an academic perspective. Recent studies have been able to find connections between abusive supervision and moral disengagement, revealing that

employees who are subject to this sort of treatment will unavoidably engage in some sort of deviant behaviours in an attempt of repelling the guidelines or standards imposed by the very same organization that are mistreating them, disabling the employees' ability to feel sorrow for these actions (Valle, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Harting, 2019).

Non-surprisingly, employees are an insightful indicator of how individuals may develop different levels of moral disengagement according to their personal and surrounding circumstances. Regarding employees revealing low levels of moral disengagement, these are more likely to endure higher levels of psychological uneasiness when confronted with immoral deeds exhibited by colleagues, which turns them more susceptible to developing guilty consciences and further prepared to recognize improper conducts from peers, or more remarkably, their superiors (Bonner, Greenbaum, & Mayer, 2016). As such, it is natural to assume that those in hierarchically advantageous positions within organizations may have a tendency to abuse their leadership roles and, therefore, display unethical behaviours or looser criteria in decision-making processes.

One key element that must be comprehended for this study is the role of the leader within the company. Theories suggest that a leader can have countless definitions and even be subdivided into different categories, (Offermann, Kennedy, & Wirtz, 1994), but it's the lack of leadership skills that eventually lead to many of the following issues, as a morally disengaged leader displays erratic behaviours in many distinct ways.

Finally, it is quite easy to understand why studying moral disengagement within this context should become a great priority to companies, which would then start wondering about possible solutions for these sorts of organizational issues: because in worst case scenarios, clients themselves may be at risk, and therefore the whole business. Studies have shown that the breach of employees' contracts in restaurants have indeed an effect on customers, as they become targets of inappropriate behaviours (Bavik & Bavik, 2015), which may deeply affect the reputation of the establishment, and may even lead to an overall decline of quality of service, potentially even foreshadowing worse scenarios. It is also important to mention that such consequences may occur throughout the several areas of the hospitality sector, despite the clear differences between hotels and restaurants.

Burnout

Herbert Freudenberger, who is widely regarded as a pioneer in the study of burnout, he first came upon the concept as he studied a group of volunteers working at a clinic for drug addicts in New York. About a year into his work, Freudenberger began to notice a "*gradual energy depletion and loss of motivation and commitment, which was accompanied by a wide array of mental and physical symptoms.*" (Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003: 405)

This concept has grown to such an extent that worldwide organizations have just recently acknowledged it as a full-fledged disease, classifying it as an occupational phenomenon instead of a medical condition, emphasizing three main aspects of burnout: feelings of depletion or exhaustion, a surge in mental distance from the job and the reduction in overall efficacy ('WHO', 2019).

Despite its very specific origins, burnout quickly spread and began to affect not only young professionals that happened to be exhausted, but also all those who became vulnerable to it by working with other people in some way, regardless of their job functions (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Beyond this, Maslach (1986) mentions that this syndrome disables the ability of workers to engage with clients on a psychological level, due to the depletion of emotional resources, which can inherently lead to a decline of quality of service.

This level of insight may prove useful to companies that keep seeking ways to deal with fatigued workers, as well as predict negative outcomes when they eventually clash with clients, creating irreversible damages to business.

Schaufeli (2009) states that there's an unevenness of demands over resources, regarding Bakker and Demerouti's JD-R model (2007), in which the increase of demand (e.g. more staff with further training/education) isn't satisfied by the resources available, creating a gap that must be filled with existing staff, equipment and provisions, which in turn worsens any cases of energy depletion.

However, once this gap is noticed by the organization and the actions taken don't correspond to what their own core values dictate (Argyris, 1982) , it reveals a great disparity between their established image and reality, which leads to a dire situation, as employees accuse the corporate levels of hypocrisy and authority abuse.

Considering this JD-R model, it may be proved through burnout that the lack of resources, such as the support from leaders, may be worsened by an increase of previously mentioned demands, leading to a less amount of energy in employees, and therefore bigger exhaustion levels.

As such, this study also tries to establish a link between the loss of resources due to LMD, as leaders can influence employees through their actions, as role models, through their position, status and inherent authority to coerce the behaviours of those underneath them.

This process is called social learning, and it relies on the absorption of the leader's *modus operandi* to the employees, as anything can be learned through observation of one's behaviour and respective consequences (Bandura, 1986). Naturally, morally disengaged leaders who display ethically poor management or interpersonal skills may have a lasting impact on employees, creating a lack of social support, as well as further deteriorate their well-being.

The amount of research invested on this subject has grown quite substantially ever since it was first recognized as a widespread problem to be dealt with. Some of the most knowledgeable authorities on this matter have been carefully analysing the meaning and seriousness of burnout since its initial state, as well as elaborate tools to measure its severity or even developing new methods to manage it (Maslach et al., 1986, 2008, Schaufeli et al., 2003, 2009).

Research has shown thus far some progress in linking burnout with the hotel industry on topics such as job stress and customer service quality (Varca, 1999), amongst others, and regarding burnout itself, some studies have been conducted to determine what backgrounds exist that may lead to such circumstances (Kim, 2008).

Despite this, not much research had been done thus far concerning the full extent of burnout within the hotel industry considering the prospect of existing relationships with the remaining variables, making this study somewhat innovative in this regard.

However, some studies have already provided valuable insights on how it operates when paired with other dissimilar topics, namely on emotional intelligence and its importance on job satisfaction (Lee & Ok, 2012), as well as the interactions that may arise with seemingly polar opposite concepts, as it is the case with job engagement (Schaufeli, Salanova, Lez-Roma, & Bakker, 2001).

Therefore, it is proven that burnout is indeed a fairly important phenomenon to evaluate and, despite the diversity of research in some backgrounds, it becomes particularly relevant within the hotel industry. Due to its inherent problems originating from job stress, work-family conflicts, overwhelming workloads, and other factors, employees from this sector are therefore prone to burnout symptoms, which consequently leads to them considering resigning from their work (Mansour & Tremblay, 2018).

As such, it is apparent that a connection between moral disengagement of leaders and burnout must exist in the workplace, with the expectations that their synergy might deteriorate already existing conditions, which will subsequently lead to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: *The leader's moral disengagement is positively correlated with the employees' burnout.*

Presenteeism climate

Considering both previous variables, this study will seek to verify the relevance of presenteeism climate as a mediator in the relationship between LMD and burnout. The existence of such a relationship could have deep implications within companies, as they search for the best ways to prevent harmful consequences in dealing with burnt-out employees, particularly if there's evidence of an inadequate working environment.

Amongst many definitions that might be accurate, presenteeism may be described as "*attending work while ill*" or "*working despite feeling unhealthy*" (Johns, 2010: 1,3), at least when it comes to an organizational setting. This meaning, however, is rather restrictive and overlooks other aspects that presenteeism entails, such as the love for one's job, the motivations to work, or lack thereof, moral constrictions, and job insecurity (Johns & Nicholson, 1982). Because these reasons appear to be legitimate in the minds of employees, the compulsion to disregard their own health circumstances for the purpose of complying to their established shifts is greater, particularly in organizational groups whose remuneration stands as the lowest within a company, as previously conducted studies show (Aronsson, Gustafsson, & Dallner, 2000). As a direct consequence of this, businesses which carry on with their operations as usual whilst taking no notice of the worsening

of staff well-being, begin to verify a decline on productivity levels displayed by their active personnel, which can be later linked to some degree of illness.

Presenteeism might be directly associated with a spectrum of policies that tend to enhance and promote its growth within organizations. Regarding payroll, for example, studies show that, contrary to expectations, higher levels of salary don't necessarily mean higher levels of absenteeism, as employees feel less the need to skip work leisurely, but then, simultaneously, it is shown that sick pay plans for poorly paid employees also lead to a lack of absences in general (Johns, 1997) The prospective explanation for this phenomenon lies with the development of presenteeism related issues, as these cases of shortage of support from the organization may lead to a different way of managing their lives.

Another major cause for the presence of unwell employees at work is related to the threat of deliberately dismissing employees as a result of a change in corporate strategies or for other similar purposes, in other words, the dread of downsizing. Upon receiving the notice that an action like is will soon ensue, it may be expected a loss in absenteeism (and, intrinsically, a rise in presenteeism) mainly due to a sudden fear of losing one's position. Additionally, sick people who are already working beyond what they should may find further problems as they make an effort to work harder and for longer hours, just to give out the impression that they are better suited than others to keep their job, which will inevitably, of course, lower even more the productivity levels. (Simpson, 1998)

The relevance of presenteeism in this study is heightened by the fact that its interaction with burnout has been a topic for research for quite some time (Ferreira & Martinez, 2012; McGregor, Magee, Caputi, & Iverson, 2016), more prominently through JD-R models that clearly show the impact of overwhelming job demands on employees when unbalanced with proper job resources. McGregor (2016) enumerates a series of examples associated with physical and psychological strains to employees, such as work-family disputes, abnormal working schedules, amongst many other impairments and adversities present on a regular basis.

These factors, along with other ones, have also been found in studies pertaining the health sector, in which staff (e.g. nurses and doctors) would perceive their work environment through a series of "reciprocal expectations" between themselves and the organization, which would then influence their behaviour due to a seemingly established psychological contract, in which social status and

positions would become an integral part of (Ferreira et al., 2015). Additionally, there has also been some research on how relevant it can be to have proper supervision in the workplace along with job resources (e.g. job autonomy), as these factors may help mitigate the impact of job demands (Mach et al., 2018), which can provide some fitting contrast to the effects of LMD on presenteeism climate and all subsequent conditions.

Regarding the hotel industry, presenteeism climate has started to become increasingly relevant and has already been studied to some extent (Arslaner & Boylu, 2017; Chia & Chu, 2016). Because of the nature of this industry, the operational tasks are very cumbersome and start to deteriorate one's health over time, explicitly on departments that deal with clients face-to-face, such as Food & Beverage, Front Office, Housekeeping, amongst others.

In order to create a proper setting that worsen one's health, presenteeism climate merely has to ease the setting in of conditions such as stress, work-life balance related issues, direct approach from increasingly demanding clients, lack of proper shift management (hotels of higher quality are expected to have a constant functioning Front Office department at all times, 24 hours a day) and even precarious job conditions and security. Research has shown that presenteeism in this sector has not been properly addressed from an academic standpoint whilst simultaneously indicating its importance in regulating relationships between employees and customers (Arjona-Fuentes, Ariza-Montes, Han, & Law, 2019), placing presenteeism climate as a suitable variable to be studied alongside moral disengagement and burnout, potentially even uncovering results that may enlighten current missing links.

However, its role as a mediator is a rather new approach to the topic, allowing this study to establish a new mark from which further research may be done from now on. As such, it is clear that presenteeism climate has the potential of becoming a suitable mediator for this study, which allowed for the following hypothesis to emerge:

Hypothesis 2: *The relationship between the leader's moral disengagement and the employees' burnout is positively mediated by the presenteeism climate.*

Contract Types

This variable became a feasible moderator for the purpose of this study due to the impact that different types of contracts may have on employees' predisposition to work for any company, and since the perpetuity of work is not guaranteed, stress levels may rise further for employees without permanent contracts, creating a sense of job insecurity (Johns, 2010) affecting their professional relationships with their peers and managers in the meantime.

Regarding the hospitality sector, contracts considered as precarious are one major subject in development, as it affects numerous countries spread through all continents, such as Japan, Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal, where employees are offered poor contracts that can be disguised as training experiences (internships or traineeships), limited time employment opportunities for up to six months, and other offers as such, which are, unfortunately, common practice in these countries (Edralin, 2014).

On the contrary, Vahtera et al. (2004) discovered that employees with permanent contracts engaged more in sickness induced absenteeism, even if there were ongoing downsizing policies or performance management programs. This information allowed to conjecture a scenario in which employees with temporary contracts were engaging in presenteeism, as they had greater susceptibility to being targets of such actions, leading them to put in extra efforts to perform more and better for managers to appreciate, in spite of their health conditions.

In order to reduce the disparity in the existing data, two main types of contracts were formed: precarious contracts and permanent contracts. The concept of precarious contracts entails both fixed term contracts and temporary contracts, as they share by definition a conclusion date for the contracts, despite being quite different in their actual functions.

Oppositely, the permanent contracts involves solely employees that don't have any termination dates defined upon signing the contract and whose position may be considered for the long term, which can be very beneficial to the company, as it saves recruitment fees and reduces turnover while training these employees to become greater assets in the future. Despite this, an interesting situation may occur, as LMD levels may rise with employees bound by this type of contract, as they are prone to become stressed due to their daily responsibilities, and possibly engage in unethical actions to relieve some of this strain, which may eventually pass on to employees through

social learning (Paciello, Fida, Cerniglia, Tramontano, & Cole, 2013). In a way, LMD may serve as a mechanism to cope with adverse situations and simultaneously circumvent any moral responsibility. (Fida, Paciello, Tramontano, Fontaine, Barbaranelli, & Farnese, 2015).

Another theory that may prove useful in this context is the Implicit Leader Theory (ILT), which shows that followers are able to tell a leader from a non-leader unconsciously, depending on the strengths of the leader's traits (Shondrick & Lord, 2010). However, if such leaders start behaving wrongfully, employees will understand through social learning that such actions aren't that mischievous, and because leaders take no responsibility for their actions, employees' action can't be prevented from incurring in a similar fashion in similar situations. Therefore, it is possible that LMD may have a significant relationship with employees bound by permanent contracts.

It is important to mention that this proposed division of types of contracts also sought to comprise all the options available in the questionnaires whilst maintaining the concepts quite simple and easy to understand, while establishing the crucial differences between both notions. In sum, this distinction was made in order to clearly show the impact of overwhelming job demands on employees that aren't safe or secured by the contracts that connect them to a company.

This concept has already been studied and duly tested before, only it was done in a setting that aimed to link precarious contracts and mental health issues (Moscone, Tosetti, & Vittadini, 2016). The results were found to be quite interesting and helped corroborating the fact that, not only are precarious contracts related to higher chances of developing health problems that compromise the employees' well-being, but the "promotion" or transition into a permanent contract displays a tendency to reduce such effects, and therefore prevent any further physical or psychological damage.

Furthermore, recent studies have also shown the existence of a connection between the effects of fulfilling psychological contracts and organizational citizenship behaviour, stating that such fulfilment can, in fact, improve the employees' general perception on the support given by the organization, namely on the hotel industry (Ahmad & Zafar, 2018), which only helps corroborating the validity of contract types in being suitable for research.

Bearing this in mind, it is now possible to create some expectations regarding what results should be able to be obtained later on in this dissertation, namely the increasing of burnout levels as LMD levels also rise, but only for employees who established a precarious contract with the company.

When it comes to employees with permanent contracts, it is quite difficult to determine possible outcomes, since the questionnaire did not contemplate the possibility of promotion/transition of contracts. It is also expected that the effects of LMD on burnout through presenteeism climate are greater in cases of job precarity, as employees are deprived of resources (Baeriswyl, Krause, & Schwaninger, 2016).

However, employees with permanent contracts can be expected to display lower levels of burnout overall, as well as display higher levels of LMD, as previously mentioned. Considering all the previous points, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 3: *The indirect effect between the leader's moral disengagement and the employees' burnout, within person level burnout through presenteeism climate, is conditional upon the contract type of employees, such that the relationship is only significant for employees who are bound by a precarious contract.*

Considering all these hypotheses, it is now possible to create a model that represents all variables and respective relationships, to better illustrate the objective of this paper:

Figure 1 - Conceptual Model
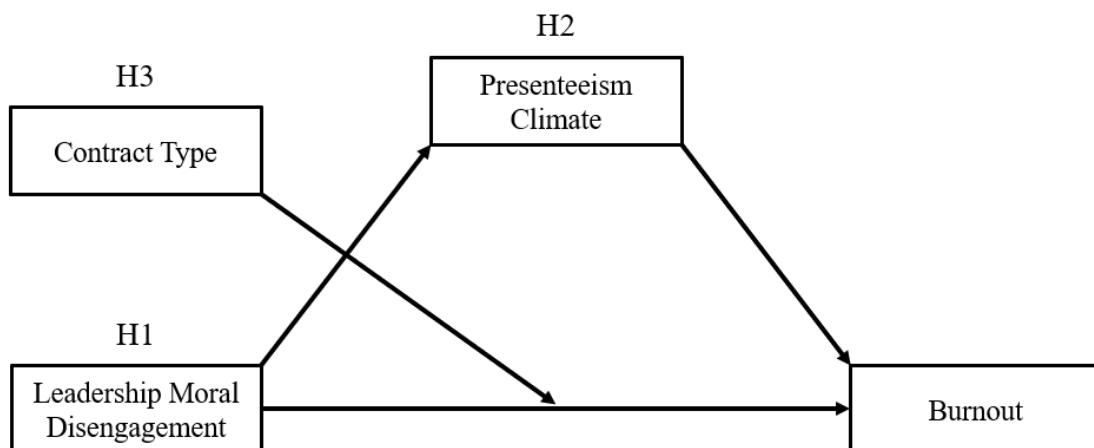
Methodology

Framework

It is proposed that presenteeism climate (*M*) mediates the relationship between leader's moral disengagement (*X*) and employee's burnout (*Y*). This means that, when leaders display behaviours that are considered immoral, those may enhance the conditions for presenteeism climate in the organization, which will consequently increase the existing employees' burnout levels.

Furthermore, we expect that the type of contract (*W*) moderates the relationship between leader's moral disengagement and burnout. More specifically, we expect that this relationship will become weaker when employees are bound by permanent contracts, contrasting with a stronger synergy with those bound by precarious contracts (e.g. temporary contracts or internships).

In order to gather data regarding the connection of these variables, a quantitative study was selected as the most suitable option, more explicitly in a diary format, which allowed data to be collected from five consecutive working days in a span of a full week, which takes into account employees who were scheduled to work during weekends and/or rest during weekdays.

This particular framework enables some variables, namely burnout, to be checked on a daily basis, increasing fivefold the amount of data accumulated and reinforcing the significance of the developments and analysis made afterwards, which will be made on the individual level. Additionally, the fact that there's many days in a row may help finding evidence of further fatigue and tiredness of employees, possibly more accentuated towards the latter days of work, as these factors build up throughout the week.

Data Gathering

The context of this dissertation involves a sample from previously selected hotels whose managers and directors approved their employees' involvement and seeks to gather data from departments that are meant to have an ongoing contact with external clients, such as the Front Office, Food and Beverage outlets and Housekeeping. In order to capitalize on the total amount of answers obtained through the questionnaires, the overall quantity of required to be answered per hotel was

established initially by team leaders and department supervisors who would distribute them accordingly at the start of the answering period.

Strategies could be implemented to make this process more efficient and effective, either by leaving the questionnaires on a designated location at the end of shift or by allowing employees to keep them throughout the whole week, whichever strategy suited better to each person in order to maximize the total amount of data gathered at the end. It is also important to mention that the questionnaire is meant to be anonymous, and any personal information required, such as gender and age, is for social demographics related statistics only.

After collecting the questionnaires from all the hotels involved in this study, it was very clear that the response rate was rather high, but unfortunately there were some circumstances that compromised some of them (incomplete, blank, unclear answers, etc), rendering them obsolete for statistical purposes.

Beyond this, there were some cases in which employees simply mentioned a lack of understanding of the presented questions, promptly raising the difficulty in completing all the required questions, lowering the motivation to actually do so, and consequently leading to delivering the questionnaire without being completely filled out. At the end of a thorough review of all viable documents, the answers were then inserted into SPSS for further analysis.

Sample Details

The present research paper collected data on a sample of 129 employees. All data may be found at Appendix 1, pertaining to sociodemographic information. The criteria required to meet the participation conditions are as follows: (a) Age, (b) gender, (c) academic qualifications, (d) department, (e) leadership position, (f) contract type. Additionally, all fields must've been filled accordingly throughout the duration of the study (5 working days). Questionnaires which did not meet these requirements were not selected for further analysis.

The participants' mean age was 32 years old for men (mean *[M]* = 32.14; standard deviation *[SD]* = 10.695; min. = 18; max. = 59) and 36 for women (*M* = 35,91; *SD* = 12.245; min. = 19; max. = 64). A small part of male (24.5%) and female (16.2%) participants had an undergraduate degree.

Regarding departmental distribution, male participants are mainly part of Front Office (32.1%) or Food & Beverage (60.4%). On the other hand, most female participants are part of the Housekeeping department. Employees with leadership positions are naturally scarce, consisting of 28.3% amongst male participants and 17.6% amongst female participants.

Considering now the contract types, there's a very even split between precarious contracts and permanent contracts within in both genders (41.5% in males, for both types, along with 33.8% for females with precarious contracts and 35.3% with permanent ones). As a side note, 17% of male and 28% of female participants omitted their contract type.

According to the collected results on gender distribution, there seems to be a slightly larger number of women, as there are 57% women to 43% men, which was somewhat expected, bearing in mind that some departments in the hotel industry, namely Housekeeping, usually tend to have an overwhelmingly higher number of women in its ranks, and taking into account that nearly 23% of questionnaires are from the Housekeeping department, this discrepancy may be justified through this reasoning.

In terms of departmental distribution, the vast majority of employees are in the areas of Housekeeping (23%), Front Office (30%) and Food & Beverage (42%), and only 1% of the collected answers belongs to members of the hotel Boards or Administration, despite 27% of the employees displaying a higher hierarchical positions, such as supervision or management responsibilities within the respective departments.

There's also the fact that 40% of the employees have at least 1 or 2 children to take care of (18% have 1 child, 15% have 2 children and 7% have 3 or more), which may have a deep impact in this study, as the predispositions of these employees change when Presenteeism climates exist in their work life, potentially escalating to burnout sooner than other employees, as a consequence from natural deterioration of physical and psychological health due to all responsibilities inherent to parenthood (Løvseth & Giaever, 2018). Additionally, only 17% of employees are married and another 17% cohabit while 56% are single, meaning that households that are more likely to become financially stable and, therefore, reduce the base stress levels (Davis & Mantler, 2004), are less abundant in this sample.

Lastly, it is pertinent to mention that 79% of the employees don't have a college degree (13% of which haven't even gotten habilitations beyond primary education), which may indicate that a lot of resources must be invested in training staff as they are recruited for operational tasks, as the ever growing need of qualified personnel willing to work in the hotel industry becomes more and more scarce in Portugal (Costa, Breda, Malek, & Durão, 2013).

Measurement of Variables

All data was acquired through a self-report questionnaire available in two versions – paper or online – allowing the participants to choose according to their own preference. However, since it was clear from the beginning that the online version would not be suitable for over 90% of participants (mainly because no computers were available for the daily tasks), only paper questionnaires were distributed and considered. The questionnaires for this dissertation relied upon a variety of research instruments that have been carefully adapted to better fit the circumstantial aspects of this paper, and also considering the employees that would answer them, namely through psychometric scales.

Starting with Leadership Moral Disengagement, the respective psychometric scale had to be derived from Bandura's Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement, MMDS (1996), applying the selected items into a leadership context to make the scale viable. The end result was an 8-item segment, allusive to some of the previously explained mechanisms, paired with a 7-level Likert scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). It is important to mention that this segment was also the very first group of items to answer in the questionnaire, and the only time it appeared on the questionnaires, augmenting its importance to the study (e.g., *According to my leader, taking credit for ideas of others is not of great importance*).

As for burnout, the basis for the measurement lies with Maslach & Jackson (1981), by selecting a total of 7 items from the Maslach burnout Inventory, focusing more on items related to emotional exhaustion (e.g., *Did you feel depleted at the end of your day of work?*), and inserting them on a daily basis setting, creating the conditions to have a constant source of information on the subject. In this case it was considered best to use a 5-level Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Never/Almost Never) to 5 (Always).

For presenteeism climate, an adaptation to a rather innovative scale named the PCQ (presenteeism climate questionnaire) was used (Ferreira et al., 2015). A total of 12 items were adapted to the current study on a 7-level Likert scale, and these items were oriented towards the perceptions of hardships faced by the employees with their peers and superiors, contemplating subjects indicative of bad working environments, no work-life balance policies and lack of care for one's wellbeing (e.g., *I feel that I'm evaluated by the amount of hours spent at work.*).

Finally, it is important to acknowledge that contract types were initially just a part of the socio-demographic segment of the study, which means that it was only asked in order to have it registered, in case it was later required to cross information regarding age, academic qualifications or even supervising/management roles. As such, the items available were a common distinction of contract types, all of which would later be divided into two main sections, as it'll be explained further into this paper. For statistical purposes, precarious contracts were considered as 0 and permanent contracts as 1, so that results could be easily obtained and avoid any outliers.

Data Analysis

Once gathered all the properly filled out questionnaires, some filtering was required to better verify their individual validity for this study, as well as nullify any questionnaires that were not suitable, either for being incomplete or for some varied reasons mentioned previously. Afterwards, upon inserting all data into SPSS, the research sample consisted of a total of 129 responses that could be worked with.

Regarding the variables utilized, proper settings were applied to make sure that no discrepancies could occur later during analysis, such as the appropriate decimal levels. Beyond this, any unspecified values were omitted from the final results, and any mistakes found during the process were amended accordingly. As a first approach to the data, a few principal component analyses (PCA) were made to each variable in order to identify the items that would effectively show the most reliable results.

Afterwards, a Reliability analysis was made, as shown in Table 1, and the values indicate that all studied items have a rather high internal consistency, as all of them present values above .79, considering that 0.7 is the generally acceptable value in these study contexts (Nunnally, 1978).

TABLE 1. Reliability Analysis Results

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Nº of Items
Leadership Moral Disengagement	.823	5
Presenteeism Climate	.791	5
Burnout (min. – max.)	.831 – .877	7

An aspect of the utmost importance to explain is the reliability results for burnout. In this specific case, since this study is a longitudinal one, some variables were studied individually per day, depending on the instruments used. As such, the fact that burnout was indeed measured daily required a check on reliability per time it was asked for, totalling 5 times. Curiously, the values for burnout are the highest amongst the chosen variables despite the amount of times checked, reaching .877 at the highest.

With the intention of verifying the relevance of the three hypotheses created for this study, a plug-in was added to SPSS containing a particular tool developed by Hayes (2013), which consists of a macro with specific settings that can be edited to show the models that better suit the methodology of any research paper. Naturally, an application for Model 5 was made, which simulates a simple mediation (with presenteeism climate as a mediator), a moderated mediation (with contract types a moderator) and all their intrinsic effects. Model 5 was chosen as it simplifies the previous option of studying both Model 1 and Model 4 simultaneously, condensing the data into one model only and, therefore, avoiding any incongruities that could have arisen in the process.

Despite the presentation of the results as one bulk, the model in itself resides on two main instances. Firstly, both Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were studied, as it pertains the Mediation present in the framework, considering the effects of Leadership Moral Disengagement (X) on employees' burnout (Y) as well as the significance of Presenteeism (M) in mediating the previous relationship. Subsequently, Hypothesis 3 was analysed by verifying the remaining outcomes, which means all those that were relative to the role of contract types (W) as a mediator in the relationship mentioned above.

Results

To maximize the effectiveness of the potential conclusions for this dissertation, a thorough statistical approach was ensued, and all consequent results were scrutinised to check whether more tests were required, in order to select the most accurate in the scope of this study. As such, the tests gathered for such purposes are as follow:

Descriptive Statistics & Correlations

Table 2 encompasses the results referring to Descriptive Statistics, which includes a selection of quantitative variables, namely the mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum. This set of basic statistics helps visualizing the basis for more complex tests, and may highlight some details of great importance, such as the existence of outliers or the divergence of responses.

On the other hand, Table 3 presents the Pearson Correlation Analysis, which corresponds to a parametric measurement that checks for evidence in the data for linear relationships between variables, considering both the direction and strength of such connections. In short, the straighter the line, the stronger the relationship, considering that directions may indicate if it tends to increase or decrease over time.

As it is shown below, the total amount of valid responses is not only almost the same as the research sample itself, but it also hardly fluctuates between variables, showing great adhesion by the participants, considering the length of the questionnaire.

Results from Table 2 indicate that LMD and presenteeism climate display a distribution that tends towards lower values despite showing the greatest scores in standard deviation, meaning that the work environment on the studied hotels does not, on average, display many severe symptoms of poor management or detrimental circumstances, while there are employees who have quite a different perspective.

TABLE 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Contract Types	124	.371	.485	0	1
Leadership Moral Disengagement	123	2.096	1.145	1	7
Presenteeism Climate	122	2.856	1.179	1	7
Burnout	123	2.543	.932	1	5

This divergence may occur when employees who share very different working experiences than most of their peers are influenced by either by toxic relationships with their superiors or by a lack of support from the organization regarding their health and wellbeing. Regarding contract types, such values were to be expected, since it is natural for a company to have a lot more employees than managers to oversee them, hence the proximity to lower scores and the proportionately high deviation.

A more pressing concern appears with the apparent normal distribution of burnout, which tends ever so slightly to higher values and with a standard deviation equally hard to consider relevant. However, this might mean that employees have, on average, felt exhaustion symptoms sometimes, which can therefore be interpreted as more than a few times throughout a day's work and considering that this also includes the daily variations from each employee, it might mean that perhaps not enough is being made to care for the employees' health and safekeeping on a company wide scale.

On another perspective, Table 3 shows that variables involved in the simple mediation have a statistically significant linear relationship, meaning that they are indeed correlated, and quite strongly at that (as *p*<0.01 and all values are below .3). Consequently, companies who show growing levels of Leadership Moral Disengagement may expect some growth as well in burnout symptoms and Presenteeism climates, since the direction of the relationships are positive.

Additionally, even though contract types aren't correlated as strongly with the other variables, the scores are still somewhat relevant, and the direction remains positive, which might indicate just how important this variable is actually becoming in companies, at least within the scope of this study.
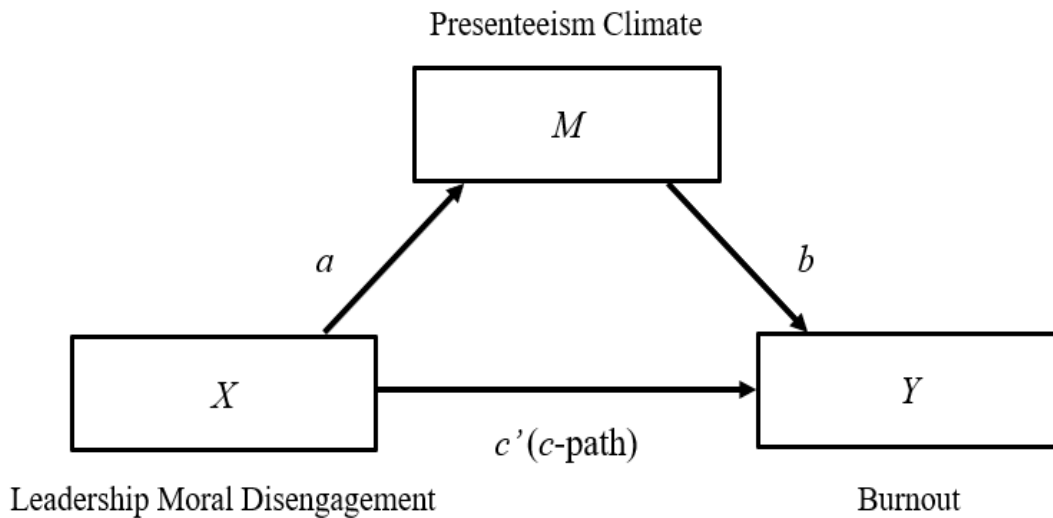
TABLE 3. Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4
1 - Contract Types	1			
2 - Leadership Moral Disengagement	.056	1		
3 - Presenteeism Climate	.026	.291**	1	
4 - Burnout	.028	.273**	.261**	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, (2-tailed)

The Mediation Effect of presenteeism climate

Figure 2 – Simple Mediation (Statistical Diagram)

Presenteeism Climate

M

a

b

X

Y

$c'(c\text{-path})$

Leadership Moral Disengagement

Burnout

24

Simple Mediation Analysis

All the 129 participants that took part in this study were asked a series of questions about a plethora of subjects related to their personal perspectives while working at their current organization, from which were then filtered the variables necessary to validate this analysis. Each daily response per employee was aggregated and later used to construct a database that accurately expressed the high scores of Leadership Moral Disengagement.

Beyond that, employees were also requested to answer questions that could bring some insight on matters related to presenteeism climate and burnout, because if the respective scores appear higher, it could show that the organization has a culture that not only indirectly promotes longer working hours and mutual distrust between leaders and employees, but also allows for these conditions to constantly worsen, endangering the health of affected employees, which naturally threatens overall productivity levels.

To calculate the required results, a simulation using Model 5 from the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013) was created, which consists of a simple mediation and a moderated mediation executed simultaneously, according to the variables serving as mediators and moderators. The output filtered the data further considering a total of 122 samples for the output. For this portion of the study, only the mediation aspects will be followed.

This allows to test hypotheses based on the relationship between Leadership Moral Disengagement and burnout while, in the meantime, conferring the validity of the proposed mediator presenteeism climate as well as the moderator contract types, which will reveal the synergy between variable according to the model. The output from SPSS can be found summarized in Table 4.

On a first instance, the values that associate LMD with burnout (c-path) indicate that they are positively associated with one another ($\beta = .181$, $t_{(117)} = 2.472$, $p = .015$), which reveals right away that hypothesis 1 can be confirmed. Regarding the values depicting the relationship between LMD and presenteeism climate (a-path), they indicate that it is significant, as they are positively associated with one another ($\beta = .299$, $t_{(120)} = 3.332$, $p < .001$), while the relationship between presenteeism climate and burnout (b-path) also appears as significant ($\beta = .173$, $t_{(117)} = 3.332$, $p = .017$).

TABLE 4. Mediation Model Results

Mediation	b	SE	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
X –> M (a)	.299	.090	3.332	.001	.122	.477
M –> Y (b)	.173	.071	2.426	.017	.032	.314
X –> Y (c)	.181	.073	2.472	.015	.036	.326
X –> M –> Y (c')	.052	.034			.003	.132

Despite already having solid evidence that hypothesis 2 may be confirmed, it becomes unquestionable when results for the association of LMD and burnout through the mediation of presenteeism climate (c'-path) indicate that they are not only positively correlated ($\beta = .052$, $SE = .034$), but the 95% confidence interval confirms the existence of a mediation role, since the interval between BootLLCI and BootULCI [.003,.132] doesn't include a 0 and simultaneously remains entirely above it. Therefore, through this analysis it is safe to assume that both hypotheses 1 and 2 may be confirmed.

The Effect of contract types on a Moderated Mediation

Figure 3 – Moderation (Statistical Diagram)
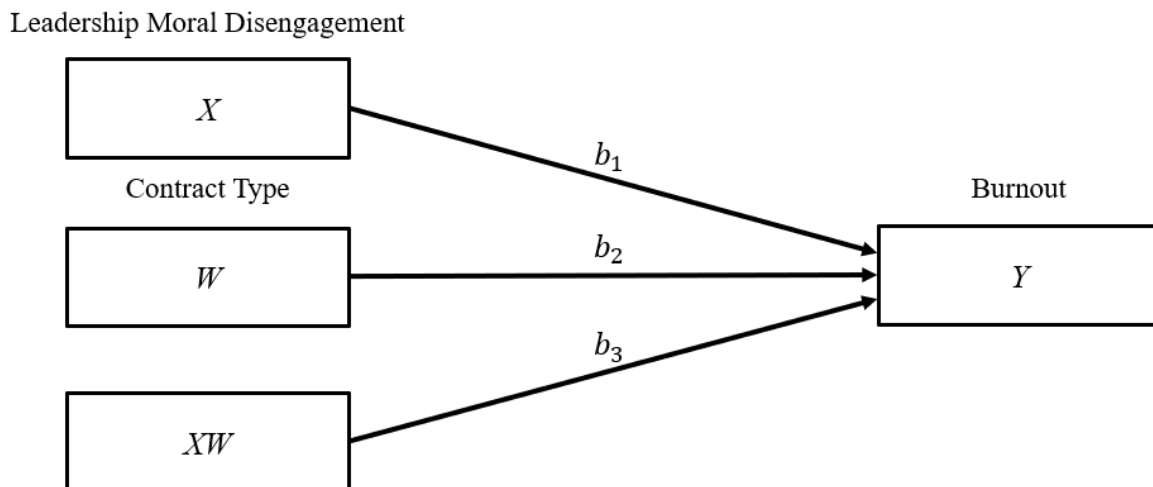
Moderated Mediation Analysis

Considering now the moderated mediation components of the Model 5 output, it is tested the relationship of LMD and burnout through the moderator contract types. Table 5 presents the values correspondent to the statistical diagram proposed by Hayes (2013), illustrating the consequences of a possible moderated mediation.

TABLE 5. Moderated Mediation Model Results

Moderated Mediation	*b*	*SE*	*t*	*p*	LLCI	ULCI
X –> Y (b_1)	.181	.073	2.472	.015	.036	.326
W –> Y (b_2)	.023	.165	.141	.888	-.303	.349
X * W –> Y (b_3)	-.306	.142	-2.153	.033	-.588	-.025
Conditional Effect for Low W	.296	.093	3.183	.002	.112	.481
Conditional Effect for High W	-.010	.112	-.090	.929	-.231	.211

Results shown for b_1 and b_2 may be discarded from further analysis, as b_1 has already been explained during the mediation process, and b_2 considers contract types as a mediator instead of a moderator, perhaps due to a limitation of the PROCESS tool, which simply reveals that contract types wouldn't be a relevant mediator between the relationship of LMD and burnout ($p = .888$).

However, the relationship between LMD and burnout through the moderated mediation of contract types is indeed significant, which may be verified by the conditional effects of Low W and High W, which correspond respectively to precarious contracts and permanent contracts. Results make it quite evident that there is a clear contrast between each type, which is ideal for future conclusions.

As such, results show that there's no relationship between LMD and burnout through the moderated mediation of permanent contracts ($\beta = -.010$, $t_{(117)} = -.090$, $p = .929$), further confirmed by the

lack of significance in confidence intervals [-.231,.211], as LLCI and ULCI values, respectively, contain a 0 in between them.

Nevertheless, when it comes to precarious contracts, the very opposite happens. Results indicate that there is certainly significance in the assigned role ($\beta = .296$, $t_{(117)} = 3.183$, $p = .002$), furtherly confirmed by the CI values, [.112,.481], which remain above 0. As such, it is possible to confirm that there is a positive correlation between LMD and burnout through the moderated mediation of contract types, but only if these are of a precarious nature, confirming the relevance and validity of hypothesis 3.

In order to further illustrate the implications of this test, the graphic displayed in Figure 4 represents the fact that, as LMD levels grow within the organization, burnout symptoms will only increase in employees who are bound to the company by a precarious contract, in other words, one that doesn't provide job security or protects the employee against companywide termination protocols (frequently induced by downsizing policies) or similar displays of a lack of proper people management guidelines.

Figure 4 – Interaction between LMD and contract types in predicting burnout.

Leadership Moral Disengagement

28
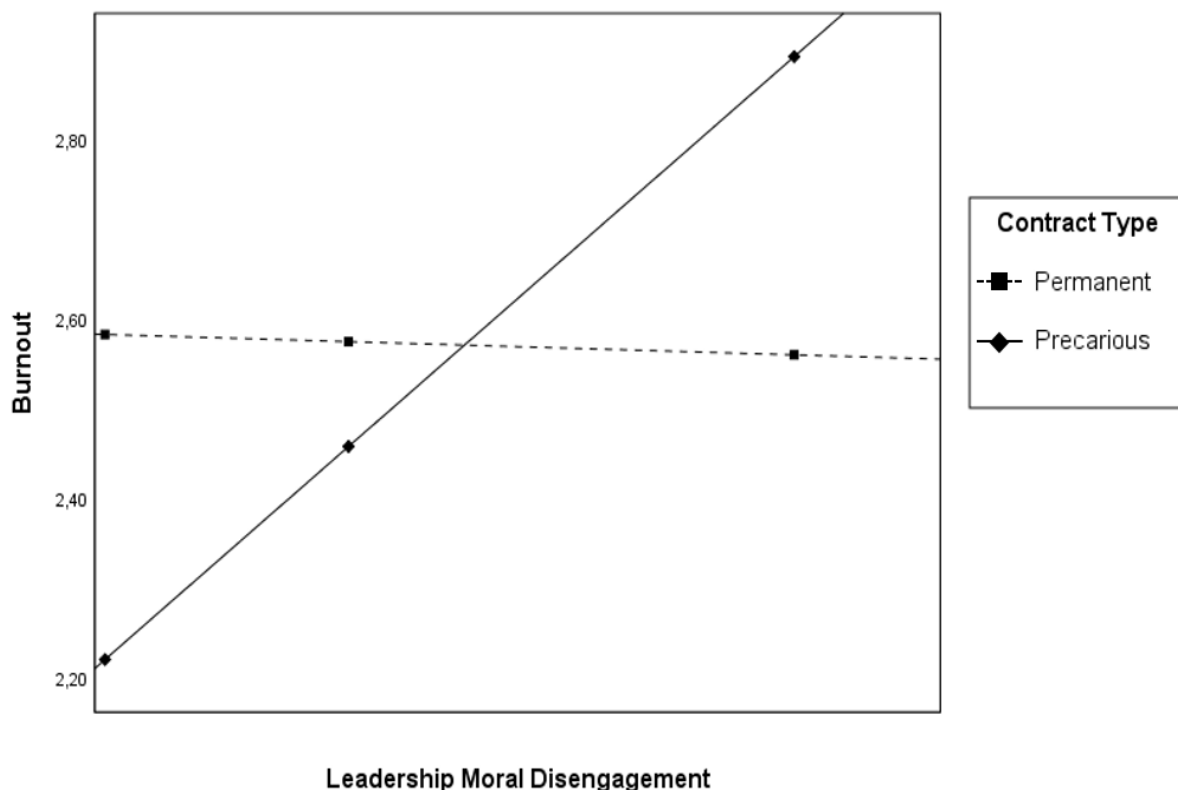
On a different perspective, the graphic displayed in Figure 5 shows what was previously suggested regarding the effects of LMD on Burnout pertaining permanent contracts.

Despite this, an interesting situation may occur, as LMD levels may rise with employees bound by this type of contract, as they are prone to become stressed due to their daily responsibilities, and possibly engage in unethical actions to relieve some of this strain, which may eventually pass on to employees through social learning (Paciello et al., 2013). In a way, LMD may serve as a mechanism to cope with adverse situations and simultaneously circumvent any moral responsibility. (Fida, Paciello, Tramontano, Fontaine, Barbaranelli, & Farnese, 2015).

Figure 5 – Direct Conditional Effect of LMD on Burnout per type of contract.
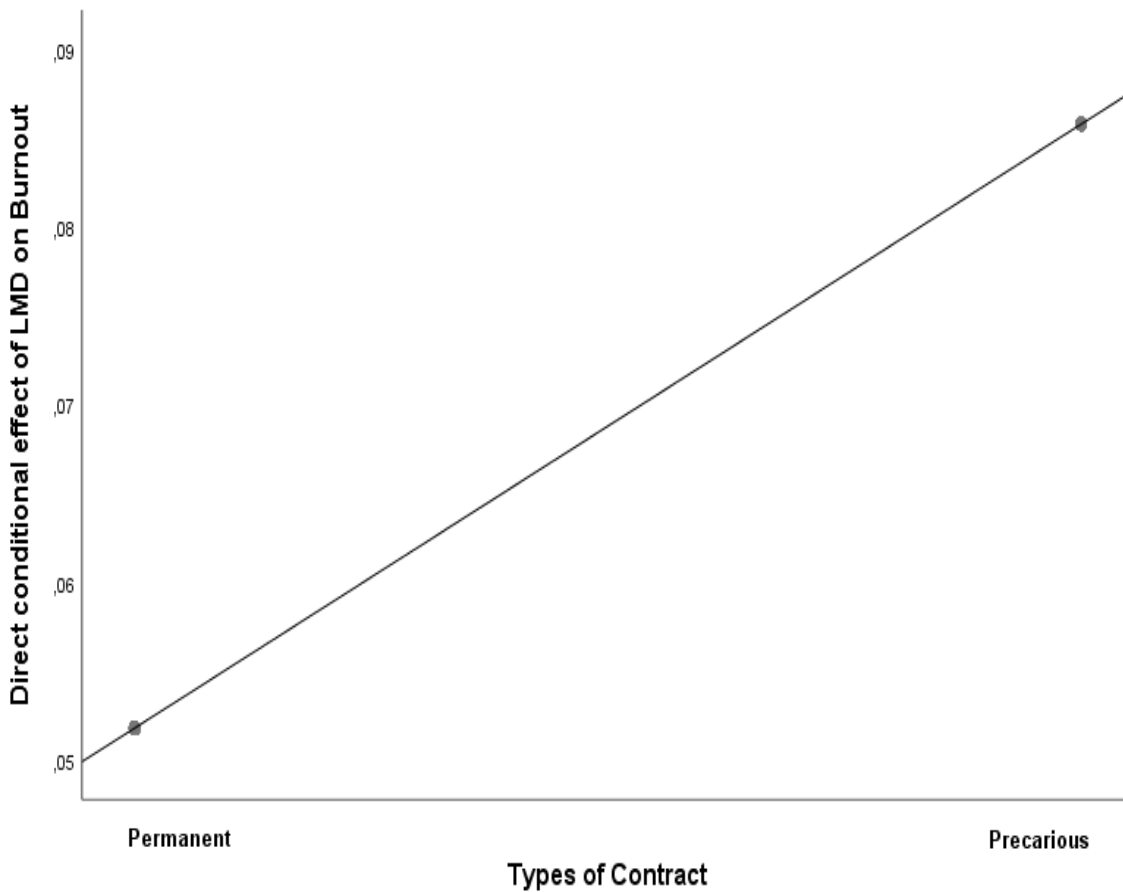
Discussion

The theoretical model that became the drive for this study relies mainly on the synergy between LMD and burnout, while utilizing means such as a mediator and a moderator to provide further depth and insight to such an innovative concept. In the very beginning of this study, several points were raised that demanded proper answers, such as the influence of presenteeism climate in mediating LMD and burnout and the role of contract types as a moderator for the same relationship. As it was also mentioned, the framework depended on the interpretation of some of Bandura's mechanisms (1996), the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), to support some predictions made regarding possible outcomes for this paper.

The extensive research provided managed to find a significant relationship between Leadership Moral Disengagement and burnout in a direct approach, as all the gathered evidence proved that an increase in LMD levels by one unit may lead to an increase in the appearance of burnout related symptoms in employees, therefore validating Hypothesis 1 of this study. Such a finding may shed some light upon previously overlooked organizational issues, since it is shown in a factual manner how a lack of work ethics in a relationship between higher-ups and employees may truly spark a series of health issues in the latter ones.

All the hotels and respective administration boards involved in this study may verify through these results how their daily operations are proceeding, and through them initiate deliberations on policies that may help reducing levels of both LMD and burnout within the company, as well as prevent them from ever rising again, perhaps through the addition of appropriate modules in formation protocols for new employees or even through events lead by experts and authorities in these affairs.

Focusing now on the findings regarding the relevance of presenteeism climate in mediating the relationship between LMD and burnout, it is shown that such an effect exists, providing support for the proposed Hypothesis 2. This result goes along with previous studies developed in checking the existence of a connection between Presenteeism and burnout (Ferreira & Martinez, 2012), adding the antecedent of hazardous conditions in the workplace due to poor leadership and subsequent adversities.

Many interpretations may be considered or speculated in hopes of making out the main cause of troubles amidst the whole process, but one explanation that surely fits this phenomenon is the

interaction of each variable with one another and the series of situations that arise as the chain of events unfolds. Simply put, the existence of meagre leaders within a company contributes to a worse work environment (relationship which was also confirmed within the results and displayed a rather strong correlation, corresponding to the a-path of the mediation process), and consequently creates a more suitable atmosphere for exhaustion, stress build-ups, tremendous loss of productivity, and even disruptive behaviours, ranging from simply arriving late to work and possibly escalating to property damage (Valle et al., 2019).

Furthermore, as the hospitality sector usually relies on shifts in operational departments instead of regular 9 to 5 schedules, the absence of criteria from supervisors in spreading the shifts for the respective staff may originate even more cases of distress, as employees might have preferred some dates or hours to work on, perhaps due to already planned activities or appointments that must now be undone. By not preventing these situations, productivity levels might not only drop that one time, but might create a tendency to lose more even more and more often, as morale further deteriorates, and burnout indicators begin to appear.

On a last instance, it was proved that contract types have a significant role in the relationship between LMD and burnout through a moderated mediation, providing not only great support to the proposed Hypothesis 3, but also creating a clear distinction between the interactions with precarious contracts and permanents contracts, ultimately revealing that only employees with precarious contracts eventually suffer from burnout as LMD levels rise, and may develop more illnesses if no measures are taken (Moscone et al., 2016).

Despite having been expected to some extent that employees bound by precarious contracts would be more prone to health issues, the results succeeded in illustrating just how much of a difference exists between both kinds. These findings also suggest that employees with permanent contracts feel such security at their job, that levels of burnout didn't appear the more LMD grew, which might also relate to the fact that employees with such contracts tend to have positions of supervision, management, or even administration.

On a more practical approach, organizations should begin to properly allocate resources for the sole purpose of supporting employees in dire circumstances, firstly by identifying who these actually are, and afterwards elaborate a plan of action that may help reduce job stress, workloads, and other factors, until the employee has fully recovered.

The actual measures and practices to be integrated must be settled by the administrations with the help of the heads of department, focusing on how to implement them effectively, so that employees may feel that they are being cared for, which will naturally strengthen the existing bonds with the organization whilst simultaneously decrease burnout related symptoms, possibly even eliminating their will to leave the company.

However, it is clear that further research must be done regarding contract types in these circumstances, in order to find more accurate insights on how exactly they may influence similar variables. Considering that the existence of a decent amount of data allowed for the previous results to be obtained throughout this study, contract types and their influence were not a main focus of the study itself, due to some limitations regarding the acquirement of data or their analysis. As such, it is of great relevance to continue pursuing information on this topic, as its importance on society is bound to keep growing.

Considering that the setting chosen for the purpose of this paper was the sector of hotel management, it is also relevant to understand that the dimension of the study wasn't boundless, despite being somewhat appropriate for the overall scope demanded for an academic dissertation. This means that due to the normal workflow of daily procedures, the data acquired was not perfect nor unlimited, but it was enough to reach viable conclusions with what was possible to collect and analyse.

Despite these aspects, future research could gain immensely from in-depth meetings and interviews, as qualitative methods allow for a more personalized approach, considering the actual opinions and experiences from employees, enriching exponentially the insights on the studied variables, as well as their actual impact on a daily basis as well as their evolution, assuming that the interviews would be conducted on a five-day diary, similar to this dissertation, for better results.

Future research could also integrate a greater variety of hotel chains, possibly by including multinational chains with several hotel categories, ranging from bed and breakfast (B&B) to luxurious hotels, in order to obtain data from as many different settings and backgrounds as possible. The metrics applied to each hotel would need to be done according to the specifications of each category of hotel, so that the quality of the overall data collected is ensured and allowing for a more detailed study based on each category's characteristics.

Conclusion

This study sought to deepen the current understanding of burnout by introducing the concept of Leadership Moral Disengagement, which is relatively innovative in the academic field (Bonner et al., 2016), and study the consequences that emerged from their interactions whilst concurrently studying two other variables: presenteeism climate and contract types. The initial purpose was to gather evidence that these two concepts were not only intertwined, but also growing and developing in the hotel industry (Santhanam, Kamalanabhan, Dyaram, & Ziegler, 2017), and by doing so it would be possible to show to the administration boards just how relevant they are in daily operations and spark a need for change and begin a pursue for plausible solutions.

Despite the existence of a somewhat vast pool of information regarding burnout, all other variables aren't researched as often or as thoroughly, which means that this particular paper might contribute to an almost pioneer field of study, more specifically regarding the approach on the effects of Leadership Moral Disengagement as an antecedent of burnout. Even though there were clear limitations to such a complex questionnaire and the explanation of concepts with hardly any research made, it is safe to say that all expectations for this study were properly met, as results confirmed the relevance of all three initial hypotheses.

Therefore, it can be concluded that LMD affects the appearance or development of burnout symptoms in employees, while presenteeism climate serves an appropriate mediator in this relationship, as it accentuates said symptoms. At the same time, it can be said that contract types are a viable moderator for this relationship, as the effects were significant when precarious contracts were contemplated.

This paper may serve as an addition to future research made on a similar basis, as it contains evidence that these variables positively affect one another. Further data may also strengthen the findings gathered here, accentuating their relevance, and even providing results with more significance. Regarding previously unknown fields, adaptations may be made to insert these variables to a variety of different backgrounds, as it has been done before, on the education sector, for example (Ferreira & Martinez, 2012).

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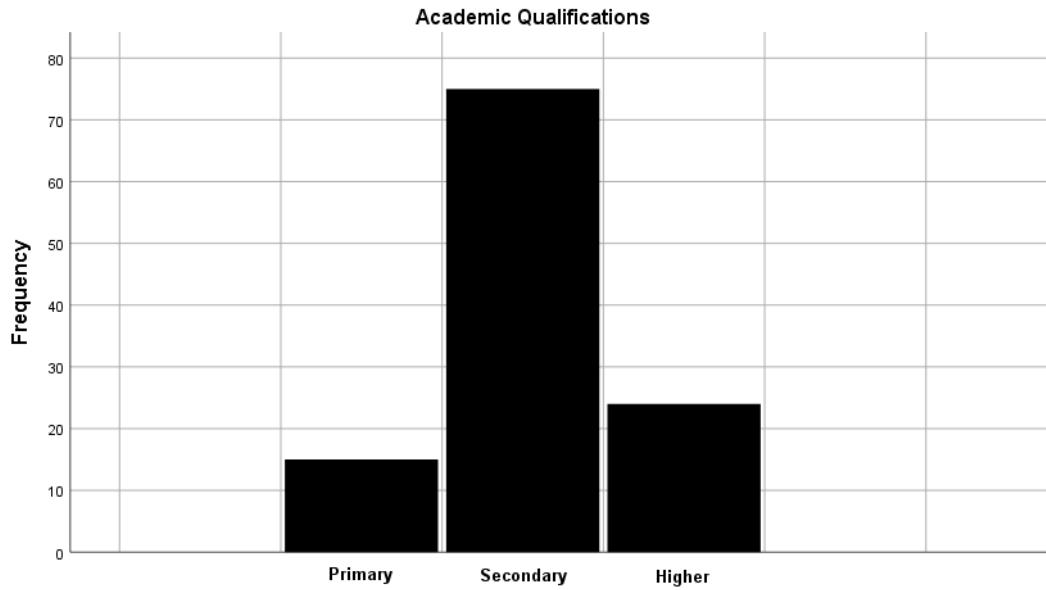
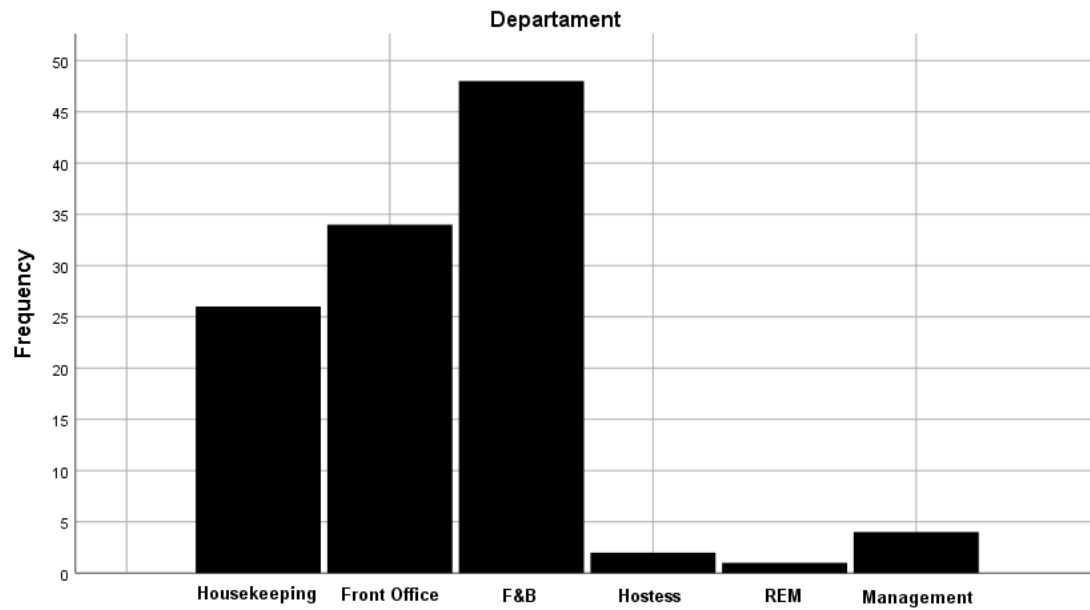# APPENDIX 1: Sociodemographic Data

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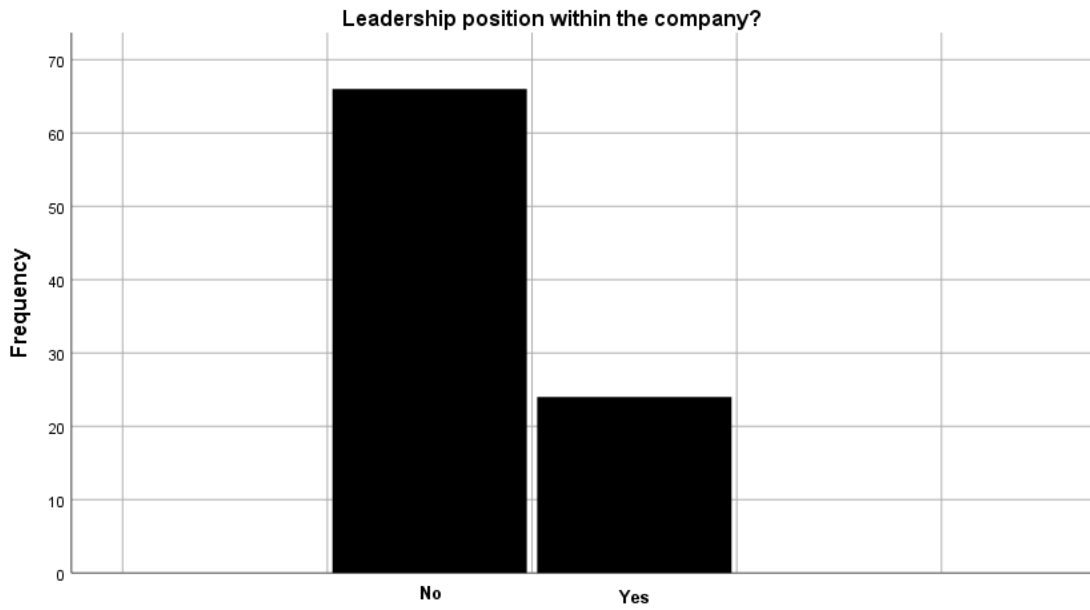1. Age distribution graphic.
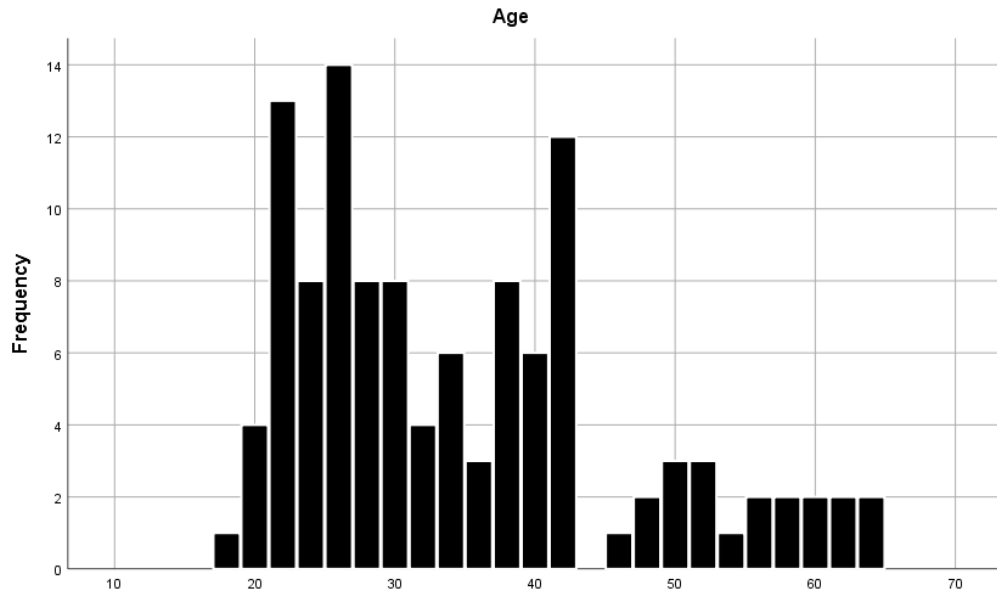
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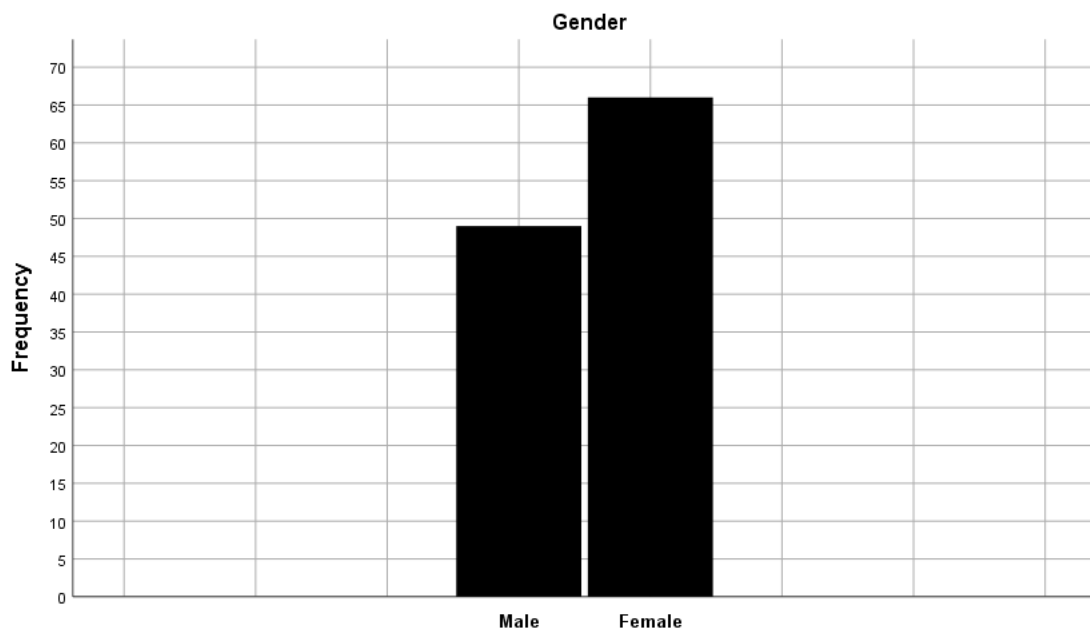
3. Academic qualifications distribution graphic.

Academic Qualifications

4. Department distribution graphic.

Departament

5. Leadership Position distribution graphic.

Leadership position within the company?

6. Contract Type distribution graphic.

Contract Type