Value congruence, control, sense of community and demands as determinants of burnout syndrome among hospitality workers

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Abstract

Employees working in the hospitality industry are constantly exposed to occupational stressors that may lead employees into experiencing the burnout syndrome. Research addressing the interactive effects of control, community and value congruence, to alleviate the impact of workplace demands on experiencing burnout is relatively limited. The present study examined relationships among control, community and value congruence, and workplace demands and the three components of burnout. A sample of 418 employees working in a variety of hospitality associations including restaurants and hotels in Spain were recruited. Moderation analyses and linear regressions analyzed the predictive power of control, community, and value congruence as moderating variables. Results indicate that control, community and value congruence were successful buffers in the relationships between workplace demands and the burnout dimensions. The present findings offer suggestions for future research on potential moderating variables, as well as implications for reducing burnout among hospitality employees.

Key words: burnout; stress; engagement; hospitality industry; value congruence; community; workplace

1. INTRODUCTION

Worker interaction with certain working risk conditions as chronic job stress and

overload could cause syndrome of burnout, being this syndrome a consequence of work [1]. Herbert Freudenberger [2], in 1974, defined this syndrome as the feeling of defeat that derives from demands that require a high level of energy and employees´ personal involvement. Maslach and Jackson [3], in 1981, provided an operational definition of burnout: the Maslach burnout inventory. This definition focalized on the emotional responses of the affected workers, highlighting the presence of symptoms of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and the lack of personal accomplishment [4]. This definition had been reconceptualized to improve its factorial validity and also, to get its applicability in all kinds of occupations, defining burnout as "*a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, and is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy, which constitute the 'Maslach burnout inventory-general survey' (MBI-GS)"* [4, p.397]. Exhaustion is defined as the feeling of not being able to continue working, due to the depletion of emotional resources, usually arises as a result of prolonged exposure to high work demands. Cynicism refers to the lack of interest and loss of meaning, as well as indifference and detachment toward one's job. Inefficacy is defined by the feeling of being unable to complete tasks due to feelings of extreme incompetence. Burnout includes a stress component in the exhaustion aspect of the syndrome, but includes as well reflections on respondents' relationships with service recipients and on their own performance as employees.

Regarding the consequences on the health of workers, burnout can disturb individuals' sleep patterns, cause eating disorders, and cardiovascular issues, as well as promote the development of drug abuse problems and feelings of depression and anxiety [5–12]. Burnout has been associated with various forms of job absenteeism, intention to leave the job, leads to lower productivity and effectiveness at work, it is associated with decreased job satisfaction and a reduced commitment to the job or the organization, has a negative impact on working

101 environment, causing greater personal conflict and disrupting job tasks [4] .

102 Burnout most commonly arises when an organization exercises excessive demands and
103 does not supply employees with the resources needed to meet these demands [13]. Past
104 literature has shown the relationship between burnout and helping professions, specifically
105 health, social services, and teaching [14–16]. The potential for emotional strain is greatest for
106 workers in the helping professions because they are constantly dealing with other people and
107 their problems [17], like hospitality worker whose work involves extensive and direct face-to-
108 face contact with other people.

109 Hospitality professionals is a group that is constantly exposed to high amounts of stress due
110 to the types of tasks that they are required to perform and also because of their constant interaction
111 and reliance on other people [18]. Employees are faced with a variety of sources of stress overload
112 such as the inability to monitor their jobs, the arising of interpersonal tension between coworkers and
113 their managers, dealing with difficult customers, and having a constant fear of making a mistake
114 [19]. Dealing with people can be a rewarding aspect of working in hospitality industry (good
115 customer relations, awards and praise from customers, etc.), but it also has the potential to add stress
116 to one's work duties. This emotional work refers to the regulation of emotions to create and express a
117 specific facial and bodily display aiming at achieving organizational goals [20], emotional work can
118 be detrimental to service providers both psychologically and physically [19]. These aversive and
119 complex social interactions, and the requirement to satisfy the needs and expectations of guests,
120 implies that hospitality employees may experience an excessive demands, frequent complaints, and
121 even threats of termination, being the emotional work one of the major causes of occupational stress
122 and burnout [21–25]. In certain situations, professionals working in the hospitality industry may
123 become "blinded emotionally", and as a result of work in a mechanical manner, avoid being involved
124 in their jobs, and become increasingly detached from their coworkers. This strategy to combat stress
125 forces employees to become apathetic and indifferent towards their jobs, which ultimately allows

126 them to continue working in high stress environments laden with negative conditions, highlighting
127 the importance of inter- and intra-individual emotional competencies in enhancing the resilience and
128 psychological wellbeing [26].

129 Among theoretical models developed with the purpose of explaining the burnout
130 syndrome should be outlined the demands – control model [27]. The demand-control model of
131 Karasek [27], argues that job demands are stressors whose intensity increases as the subject
132 perceives that those demands exceed his or her own resources. When this occurs, the amount
133 of control an employee has over his or her job becomes especially important as autonomy helps
134 buffer the development of work-related stressors, such as the three components of burnout. Job
135 demands refer to the workloads of the employees, and they have been operationalized in terms
136 of the amount of work that needs to be done, existing time pressures, and conflicting demands
137 [28]. A definitive aspect of the Karasek model is that control plays a moderating role on the
138 relationship of demands and stress. The workplace resource of control gives employees the
139 means of reducing the potentially stressful impact of demands. In later studies [29] social
140 support was included in the model and could be observed its' buffering role by looking at how
141 social support within the workplace could prevent burnout and high levels of job strain. Several
142 studies have shown that social support can prevent, reduce or even combat the negative effects
143 of stress responses in individuals [30,31].

144 Other more current theoretical model in the study of burnout syndrome is the value
145 congruence model, which discusses the incongruence between individual values and the
146 values held by the organization [32]. The model proposes that value conflicts will have
147 negative implications on employees, which may develop into the three components of
148 burnout, and it also proposes that the impact of value conflicts has only minor implications on
149 the exhaustion aspect of burnout but becomes more relevant when discussing the cynicism
150 and inefficacy components of the burnout syndrome [32]. Individuals go through various

processes, including personal experiences, cultural backgrounds, or professional training, which helps them develop a set of values pertaining to their work. Corporate values are expressed through organizational missions, visions, and values. Employees who hold values that are congruent with the organization will be motivated to pursue shared objectives and will be supported in their endeavours by the organization. In contrast, when an employee holds values that conflict with the values of the organization they work for, a career crisis may ensue. When in conflict, pursuing personal values at work may enhance the employee's risk of developing symptoms of burnout, and prior studies have found strong correlations between value incongruence and burnout symptoms [32–36].

The majority of the recent literature done on stress in the work environment is limited to healthcare and educational settings [35,37,38]. Few recent studies have focused on burnout levels within hospitality environments such as the hotel and catering industries. Past literature on the hospitality industry focuses extensively on other issues such as emotional dissonance, emotional exhaustion, personality traits and conflicts in the work–family environment [39–42].

An objective of this analysis is to determine the extent to which the key constructs in the value congruence model moderate the relationship of demands and aspect of burnout. To pursue this question we will first attempt to replicate the Karasek model's moderating effect for control. We will then extend the analysis to consider potential moderating effects of community and value congruence on the relationships of workload with the three aspects of burnout. We base our expectation of moderating effects on the specific qualities of the measure used in our survey [43]. This measure refers to workplace dimensions that have been established as directly pertinent to burnout and that have direct relevance to the workload area that assesses demands. We expect the value congruence model to provide a more accurate consideration of the moderation hypotheses because it goes beyond the straightforward

relationship between demands and exhaustion to consider the implications of community and value congruence for cynicism and inefficacy as well. In this study, rather than focus on the job stressors that are distinct for hospitality workers, we used an approach that assesses general areas of worklife relevant to a wide range of occupations. This approach permits direct comparisons with other occupational groups, such as healthcare and teaching

The aim of this study is to examine the interactions among job demands, job control, social support (community) and values, with the three components of burnout (exhaustion, cynicism, and efficacy).

And following the theoretical models [27,32], we hypothesized that:

- Control will moderate the relationship between workplace demands and the presence of: emotional exhaustion (H_1), cynicism (H_2), and self-efficacy, components of burnout. (H_3)
- Community will moderate the relationship between workplace demands and the presence of: emotional exhaustion (H_4), cynicism (H_5), and self-efficacy, components of burnout. (H_6)
- Value congruence will moderate the relationship between workplace demands and the presence of: emotional exhaustion (H_7), cynicism (H_8), and self-efficacy, components of burnout. (H_9).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The sample was recruited from a variety of hospitality associations and centres in Spain. The hotels, restaurants, and catering companies that were chosen to participate in this study were selected based on the size of the businesses. A total number of 12 hotels and 11 restaurants from Aragón (Spain) participated in this study. The study received approval from the European Union and the Aragon Government, and was supervised by the Aragon institute

of occupational health (ISSLA). The current study was in line with the Helsinki convention.

The final sample consisted of seven hotels, nine restaurants and one catering service, with a total of 418 active employees The sample was made up of 51,0% males and 45,5% females, and there were eleven respondents with missing data (2,6%), with an average age of 37.08 years. Majority of participants admitted being in a stable relationship (70,1%), and having 0-2 dependent children. There were 324 (77,5%) hotel workers, 61 (14,6%) restaurant workers, and 22 (5,3%) catering workers. More than half of respondents were full-time employees (67,0%). Majority of participants were employees (67,7%). There were 30 (7,2%) manager/administration workers, 68 (16,3%) receptionist/customer care workers, 6 (1,4%) caretaker, 83 (19,9%) waiters/waitresses, 66 (15,8%) kitchen workers, 60 (14,4%) room service workers, 21 (5,0%) laundry/cleaning workers, 33 (7,9%) maintenance workers, and 31 (7,4%) other wokers, there were twenty respondents with missing data (4,8%).

Prior to conducting the survey, senior managers in each company were required to solicit participation amongst their employees and gain approval for the research. Managers and employees of each of the selected centres were informed of the study. The questionnaires were distributed by the intermediate supervisors of each company. These supervisors asked their employees to fill out the questionnaires which contained questions about various sociodemographic and occupational variables, burnout, and their areas of worklife. Once the questionnaire was completed, it was put in an envelope, and handed back to the intermediate supervisor, who gave it to the main researcher. A consent form was included at the beginning of the survey which ensured the participants confidentiality and anonymity.

2.1 Measures:

- Sociodemographic and occupational factors: Subjects were asked to complete a series of questions that were related to general sociodemographic and occupational characteristics.

- Areas of worklife: To assess the level of engagement of employees the present study used the Areas of worklife survey (AWS) in its validated Spanish version [44]. This scale measures the following work areas, which contribute positively or negatively to burnout. The scale is made up of 29 items and consists of six subscales or areas: manageable workload (e.g.“I do not have enough time to do what is important in my work"), control (e.g.“ I have control over how I do my work”), community (e.g.“ People trust one another to fulfil their roles”), values (e.g.“Working here forces me to compromise my values"), reward (e.g.“ I receive recognition from others for my work”) and fairness (e.g.“ Resources are allocated fairly here”). In the present study we focused on the first four areas. Every area assesses respondents’ perceived incongruences between employees and their workplaces. The answers are presented in a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The Cronbach’s α scores for internal consistency for all subscales are ≥ 0,72 [45,p.200].
- Burnout: The Spanish version of the Maslach burnout inventory - general survey (MBI-GS) was used in the present study [46]. This adaptation consists of 16 items grouped into three dimensions: exhaustion (e.g.“I feel emotionally drained from my work”), cynicism (e.g. “I’ve become more callous towards people since I took this job”) and efficacy (e.g. “I deal very effectively with the problems of my work”). Responses are presented in a 7-point Likert scale with scores ranging from 0 = *never* to 6 = *always*. The Cronbach’s α scores for internal consistency for each of the three subscales within the MBI-GS were ≥ 0.78 [47].

3. RESULTS

The results o f the present study were analyzed with SPSS version 16. To test the demand – control (– support) model and the value congruence model the statistical analysis was focused on the areas of workload, control, community and values, and components of burnout

(exhaustion, cynicism and efficacy). The measure of community captures social support specifically and includes as well the overall social climate of workgroups [45]. Correlations were run between all of the variables to ensure that significant relationships existed between them. Afterwards, a series of moderation analyses were run to test whether the moderating variables (control, community and value congruence) could account for a significant amount of variance. A series of linear regressions were used to analyze the predictive ability of control, community and value congruence as moderating variables in the relationships between workload and three components of burnout (exhaustion, cynicism and efficacy)

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, correlations and reliabilities of the variables and scales used in this study. Control, community and values were all significantly correlated with the three components of burnout ($p < .05$). Manageable workload was correlated with exhaustion and cynicism; but not significantly correlated with efficacy. Control, community, values and manageable workload were negatively correlated with both the exhaustion and cynicism components of burnout. These correlations indicate that when individuals have a manageable workload, high control over their work, a strong community and congruence values that they may score lower on the exhaustion and cynicism components of burnout. Additionally, control, community and values were positively correlated with the efficacy component of burnout. These correlations indicate that when individuals have a manageable workload, high control over their work, a strong community and consistent values that they may score higher on the efficacy components of burnout.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations of study variables.

	M	*SD*	Efficacy	Cynicism	Exhaustion	Workload	Control	Community	Values
Efficacy	4,20	1,14							
Cynicism	1,34	1,16	-,26*						

Exhaustion	1,64	1,35	-,14*	,64*					
Manageable Workload	3,10	,77	-,01	-,34*	-,57*				
Control	3,15	,94	,26*	-,29*	-,37*	,27*			
Community	3,53	,81	,32*	-,39*	-,39*	,23*	,42*		
Values	3,49	,78	,29*	-,40*	-,45*	,40*	,47*	,48*	

*Note. N=390. *p<.05.*

Table 2 presents the results of multiple regression analyses on the effects of control, community, and value congruence as moderating variables within the relationships between workload and the three components of burnout: emotional exhaustion, cynicism and efficacy.

Table 2 Results of regression analysis on the moderating effects of control, community and values

Predictor	**β**	R^2	ΔR
Dependent variable: Exhaustion			
Manageable workload	-.50*		
Control	-.18*	.37	
Manageable workload × control	.14*	.39	.02*
Manageable workload	-.47*		
Values	-.23*	.38	
Manageable workload × values	.07	.38	.00
Manageable workload	-.53*		
Community	-.25*	.40	
Manageable workload × community	.11*	.42	.01*
Dependent variable: Cynicism			
Manageable workload	-.24*		

Control	-.17*	.13	
Manageable workload × control	.09*	.14	.01*
Manageable workload	-.23*		
Values	-.29*	.19	
Manageable workload × values	.01	.19	.00
Manageable workload	-.24*		
Community	-.31*	.19	
Manageable workload × community	.07	.20	.00
Dependent variable: Efficacy			
Manageable workload	-.15*		
Control	.29*	.08	
Manageable workload × control	.04	.08	.00
Manageable workload	-.16*		
Values	.39*	.11	
Manageable workload × values	.14*	.13	.02*
Manageable workload	-.16*		
Community	.29*	.08	
Manageable workload × community	-.00	.08	.00

**p< .05*

The analyses for emotional exhaustion confirmed significant moderating effects for control and community, but not for value congruence. At step one control and a manageable workload were strong predictors of emotional exhaustion (R^2=.39, p<.05; manageable workload β=-.50, p<.05; control β=-.18, p<.05). In the second step of the regression analysis, the interaction term between manageable workload and control explained a significant increase in variance in the emotional exhaustion component of burnout (β=.14, ΔR^2=.02, p<.05; manageable workload β=-50, p<.05; control β=-.18, p<.05). When analyzing the effects

of community as a moderator between manageable workload and emotional exhaustion it was found at step one that community and a manageable workload were strong predictors of emotional exhaustion (R^2=.40, p<.05, manageable workload β=-.53, p<.05; community β=-.25, p<.05). In the second step of the regression analysis, the interaction term between manageable workload and community explained a significant increase in variance in the emotional exhaustion component of burnout (β=.11, ΔR^2=.01, p<.05; manageable workload β=-.53, p<.05; community β=-.25, p<.05). These results indicate that control and sense of community moderate the relationship between workload and emotional exhaustion (control ΔR^2 =.02, p <.05; community ΔR^2 = .01, p<.05), therefore providing support for H_1 and H_2 Additionally, no significant moderating effects for value congruence (value congruence ΔR^2 =.00, p>.05) were found, therefore providing insufficient evidence to support hypothesis 7.

With regards to cynicism, significant results were found for the effects of control as a moderating variable within the relationship between manageable workload and cynicism, but not for community or for value congruence. At step one manageable workload and control were discovered to be strong predictors of cynicism (R^2=.13, p<.05; control β=-.18, p<.05; manageable workload β=-.24, p<.05). In the second step, the interaction between manageable workload and control explained a significant increase in variance in the cynicism variable (β=.09, ΔR^2=.14, p<.05 control β=-.18, p<.05; manageable workload β=-.24, p<.05). The control variable was a significant moderator within the relationship between manageable workload and cynicism (ΔR^2 = .01, p<.05). This moderated regression analysis confirms H_2, however, the H_8 and H_5 cannot be confirmed as there were no significant results able to support the moderating effects of community and value congruence (community ΔR^2 =.00, p>.05; value congruence ΔR^2 =.00, p>.05).

As shown in Table 2, significant results for value congruence as a moderating variable in the relationship between manageable workload with professional efficacy were found, but

not for community and control. At step one value congruence and manageable workload were strong predictors of cynicism (R^2=.12, p<.05; value congruence β=.39, p<.05; workload β=-.17, p<.05). In the second step of the regression analysis, the interaction term between manageable workload and value congruence explained a significant increase in variance in the efficacy component of burnout (β=.14, ΔR^2=.02, p<.05 value congruence β=.39, p<.05; manageable workload β=-.17, p<.05). It was found that value congruence significantly moderated the relationship between manageable workload and efficacy (ΔR^2 = .02, p<.05), therefore providing support for H_9. H_3 and H_6 were not supported as no significant moderating effects of control and community were found (control ΔR^2 =.00, p>.05; community ΔR^2 =.00, p>.05).

Graph 1 indicates that individuals who report having more control over their work are more likely to be protected against the emotional exhaustion component of burnout (H_1). The lower line of the graph plots the exhaustion scores for participants scoring one standard deviation above the mean on control variable. The upper line in contrast reflects the corresponding scores for those scoring one standard deviation below the mean on control. The slope difference on the low control line is greater than that for the high control line, reflecting a buffering effect. Thus, individuals with high control over their work were better able to buffer the effects of the relationship between workload and exhaustion than individuals with low control.

Graph 2 shows that individuals who report having an increased sense of community were able to buffer the relationship between manageable workload with emotional exhaustion (H_4). The lower line of the graph plots the exhaustion scores for participants scoring one standard deviation above the mean on community and the upper line in contrast reflects the corresponding scores for those scoring one standard deviation below the mean on community. The slope difference on the low community line is steeper than that for the high community

line, reflecting a buffering effect. Individuals with a high sense of community were better able to buffer the effects within the relationship between having an unmanageable workload and developing exhaustion than individuals with a low result of the community variable.

Graph 3 illustrates that individuals who had more control over their work were better able to buffer the relationship between manageable workload and cynicism (H_2). The lower line of the graph plots the cynicism scores for participants scoring one standard deviation above the mean on control. The upper line in contrast reflects the corresponding scores for those scoring one standard deviation below the mean on control. The slope difference on the low control line is greater than that for the high control line, showing a buffering effect. Thus, individuals with high control over their work were better able to buffer the effects of the relationship between manageable workload and cynicism than individuals with a low result o the control variable.

Graph 4 shows that individuals with stronger value congruence were better able to buffer the relationship between manageable workload and efficacy (H_9). The lower line of the graph plots the efficacy scores for participants scoring one standard deviation above the mean on value congruence and the upper line in contrast reflects the corresponding scores for those scoring one standard deviation below the mean on value congruence. The slope difference on the high value congruence line is greater than that for the low value congruence line, reflecting a buffering effect. Thus, individuals exercising low value congruence perceived more efficacy when they had a manageable workload than people with high value congruence, but in situations where an unmanageable workload is present the buffering effect of high value congruence, greatly increases the amount of efficacy experienced by these individuals.

4. DISCUSSION

The present study tested the effectiveness of the demand – control (– support) model and

363 the value congruence model in explaining the development of the three components of burnout
364 among individuals employed in the hospitality industry in Spain.

365 It was hypothesized that having control over one's work would act as a buffer within the
366 relationships between workplace demands and the presence of the emotional exhaustion, cynicism
367 and self-efficacy components of burnout (H_1, H_2, H_3). These hypotheses were partially supported,
368 as control was found to act as a buffer within the relationships between workplace demands and
369 the presence of the emotional exhaustion and cynicism components of burnout, but not within the
370 relationship between workplace demands and the self-efficacy component of burnout. This
371 finding supports the idea that individuals who have more control over their work will score lower
372 on emotional exhaustion when experiencing an unmanageable workload, than individuals who
373 have less control over their work. Additionally, when individuals have more control over their
374 work and are experiencing an unmanageable workload, they will score lower on cynicism than
375 someone who exert less control. These findings are in line with previous research [37,48–50].

376 The present findings regarding control as a successful buffer between the relationship of
377 having high demands and developing burnout are pertinent towards hospitality industry workers.
378 The discovery that having control over one's work can act as a potential buffer within these
379 relationships, is an important finding for those involved in the working world. Allowing
380 employees to feel as though they exert control over every aspect of their work tasks and roles may
381 be the primary factor responsible for the employee to feel motivated and to desire to learn more
382 about their roles and responsibilities within the organization [51].

383 However, a buffering effect of control within the relationship between job demands and
384 self-efficacy was not found, therefore providing insufficient support to confirm hypothesis 3.
385 Similar results were found in a previous study conducted on a sample of teachers where control
386 was found to be a moderator in the relationship between job demands and emotional exhaustion
387 and between job demands and cynicism, but not within the relationship between job demands and

self-efficacy [37]. This finding could be because hospitality workers may only have control over some characteristics of their work that do not directly affect their perceived levels of self-efficacy (e.g., choosing their holiday times, or their lunch breaks).

H4, *H5* and *H6* stated that community would moderate the relationship between workplace demands and the presence of the emotional exhaustion, cynicism and self-efficacy components of burnout. Only one of the three hypotheses, the *H4* was supported. The interaction term within the analysis suggests that perceived sense of community is able to act as a buffer within the relationship between workplace demands and the presence of the emotional exhaustion component of burnout. This means that individuals experiencing an unmanageable workload and a high sense of community are more likely to score lower on levels of emotional exhaustion than someone who has a lower sense of community. These findings coincide with previous research [31,49,52,53]. Moreover, limited support was found for *H5* and *H6* as community was found to be an unsuccessful moderator within the relationships between workplace demands and the cynicism and self-efficacy components of burnout. According to previous research, this finding could be related to the different sources of social support and sense of community one experiences while working within the hospitality industry [52,54]. Hospitality employees may focus on building social support and relationships within their families and friends, but not on building a strong social support and sense of community among their supervisors and colleagues.

It was also hypothesized that value congruence would buffer the relationship between workplace demands and the presence of the emotional exhaustion, cynicism and self-efficacy components of burnout (*H7*, *H8*, *H9*). These hypotheses have been partially supported, as only value congruence was found to buffer the relationship between workplace demands and the presence of the self-efficacy component of burnout (*H9*). This means that individuals experiencing high levels of value congruence will score higher on self-reported levels of self-efficacy than

someone with low levels of value congruence, when experiencing unmanageable workloads.

These findings are consistent with previous research showing that having congruent values can significantly predict levels of professional efficacy [35]. Furthermore, the value congruence model proposes that the impact of value conflicts has only minor implications on the exhaustion component of burnout but becomes more relevant when discussing the cynicism and inefficacy components of the burnout syndrome. Our results are partially consistent with the value congruence model [32], as significant relationships between value congruence and exhaustion and between value congruence and self-efficacy were found, but no significant relationship was found between cynicism and self-efficacy. This suggests that within the sample of hospitality industry employees value congruence is not a significant buffer with relation to the cynicism component of burnout.

The buffering effect of having congruent values on the relationship between emotional exhaustion and cynicism was not a significant one. Having values congruent with the organization can improve the perceived self-efficacy of hospitality workers, which could then lead to increased motivation to achieve shared aims within the company. In contrast, having values that are congruent with organizations values did not provide a protective effect against the emotional exhaustion and cynicism components of burnout within this sample of hospitality workers. This finding may be a result of the nature of the human service industry, as it is common in this industry to feel unrecognized and underappreciated by customers or by the organization you work for. These incongruent values held by employees within organizations may result in experiencing emotional exhaustion and cynicism, which ultimately may result in implications to their productivity levels and health.

There are several limitations to this study. First of all, the self-report nature of the current study limits the researcher’s ability to make causal conclusions about the present findings. Other areas of bias arise when using subjective self-reports to obtain data, such as participants altering

their responses based on their knowledge of being evaluated. This self-report bias can occur in two directions: maximization or minimization, i.e., the tendency of choosing answers to create a favorable impression or, in other cases, of trying to give a worse impression than it actually is. With regards to the surveys administered, additional confusion for participants may have arisen due to the researchers not differentiating between the types of social support they were required to answer questions about. Furthermore, the sample was too diverse, so that workers could present different patterns of burnout, depending on their interaction with the users of the service and the type of work developed, and it could provide an interesting research line in the future. Lastly, the subject study is limited to Aragón (Spain), though it includes all regions of Aragón. Although it is beyond the scope of this study, future research should examine stress in other cities and communities of Spain and then make cross-cultural comparisons. As a result, generalization and replication of the current findings awaits further empirical examination.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of the present study are crucial step towards improving the quality of the work environment and health of hospitality workers. Organizations should highlight the importance of increasing the amount of autonomy given to their employees, and fostering a supportive social environment in which their employees can prosper. These changes have the potential to act as protective factors against the development of burnout syndrome among employees, against the serious consequences that this syndrome presents for both workers and the organization. Additionally, organizations should work towards hiring employees who hold similar values to the ones upheld by the organizations they are attempting to work for, because it will increase the effort and commitment of employees. Further research directions may bring new insights into the importance of various types of social support (family, friends) on alleviating burnout symptoms as well as further exploring the importance of having incongruent values on the development of

burnout within the hospitality industry.

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