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Human dimension of the hospitality industry: Working conditions and psychological well-being among European servers

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse the human dimension of the European hospitality industry. The working conditions (e.g. employment, physical, psychosocial and organisational circumstances) of servers against a control group of employees from other service industries are scrutinised. The crucial factors that affect psychological well-being or discomfort are identified. Results confirm the precariousness attributed to servers, who represent one of the most relevant and visible professions in the hospitality industry. The working conditions of servers are unnecessarily more precarious than those in other service industries. However, such conditions differ in certain aspects. A logistic regression model is used to identify the working conditions that determine the psychological well-being and verify the difference from those in other service industries.

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry is a strategic sector in the economy of the European Union(EU). The industry has a remarkable contribution to the respective gross domestic product of member countries. This labour-intensive industry fuels the operations of many companies, thereby generating employment alongside its growth (Delfgaauw, 2007). The 2015 European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) reported that the food and beverage industry provides employment to 4.4% of the European workforce. The highest rates were found in southern European countries, such as Greece (9.4%), Cyprus (8.3%), Spain (6.6%), Italy (5.4%) and Portugal (5.3%). By contrast, the lowest rates were found in Nordic countries, such as Denmark (1.6%), Norway (1.9%), Sweden (2.0%) and Finland (2.6%). The hospitality industry also offers employment opportunities for minority groups, such as women, immigrants or young people with low education level (Fernández & Pena-Boquete, 2007). Therefore, the hospitality industry plays an important role in the employment and personal income of many Europeans, particularly those who are living in tourism-dependent countries. Although many economic activities support tourism, only a few of such activities have emphasised on the hospitality industry.

Arjona-Fuentes, Ariza-Montes, Han, and Law (2019) reveal that the working conditions in the hospitality industry need extensive scrutiny and a broad spectrum, owing to their precarious nature (e.g. low stability, seasonality, part-time work, reduced wages, exhausting workdays, discrimination or high incidence of family employment, with paid and unpaid family workers). Such working conditions lead to employee dissatisfaction (Poulston, 2008). In 2017, over four million working contracts were signed in the hospitality industry of Spain, which is the second largest tourist destination in the world with 82 million tourists. However, nearly half of these contracts lasted barely one week.

Pearlman and Schaffer (2013) explain that the human resource departments of the tourism and hospitality industries face unique challenges because of extended operation hours, intensive job demands and daily or seasonal fluctuations. Contradictions emerge in this situation. In an industry where customer service quality depends on such aspects as ethereal as the smile of servers (which can make a difference between good and bad reviews on the Internet, an essential matter in an era when consumers have substantial information provided by new technologies), ensuring that workers are efficient and committed to their organisations can result in success or failure (Ariza-Montes, Arjona-Fuentes, Han, & Law, 2018). The quality of customer service predicts the long-term survival of a company. However, Kusluvan, Kusluvan, Ilhan, and Buyruk (2010) warn for poor human resource

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practices in a traditional and exploitative manner. Various economic, psychological and sociological theories (e.g. exchange, rational choice or well-being theory) suggest that people look for employment in industries that offer good working conditions. Thus, the hospitality industry may lack motivated and committed workers if it does not offer decent working conditions and fails to promote the psychological well-being of employees. Working conditions in this industry continue to worsen. Deery and Jago (2015) describe the industry as a poor-paying environment with unsatisfactory working conditions. The main characteristics mentioned by these authors are work–family conflicts, job insecurity, time pressure, work stress, emotional exhaustion and turnover intentions.

The current study features research strengths that must be highlighted, and it has a broad spectrum of samples from a homogeneous profession (i.e. 805 servers). Janssen, Bakker, and De Jong (2001) explain that the samples used to investigate working conditions should be homogeneous in all types of 'disturbing' background variables. Servers play one of the most important roles in the hospitality industry because they are at the forefront of the industry. The current research does not focus on specific points but covers extensive working conditions against the control group (i.e. 1401 service workers). Such a broad coverage provides immense value and meaning to the results. Quantitative methodologies, particularly logistic regression models, are used to analyse the large sample size, thereby enabling us to link the working conditions with an outcome variable (i.e. psychological well-being). This investigation fills in an important research gap because of the interconnection in a holistic study of the broad spectrum of all those working conditions that had previously been studied separately. Our study analyses four dimensions, 19 subdimensions and 88 features of the working conditions amongst servers, thereby justifying the relevance of our work.

This study aims to understand the human dimension of the European hospitality industry. Moreover, it scrutinises the working conditions (i.e. employment, physical, psychosocial and organisational circumstances) of servers, which are amongst the industry's core frontline jobs (Haley-Lock, 2012). Findings are compared with those from a control group of employees from other service industries. Multivariate statistical analysis is performed to identify the critical factors that establish the psychological well-being or discomfort of both groups. This study considers the World Health Organisation's (WHO) point of view. WHO describes psychological well-being as a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and can contribute to his or her community. This description asserts that mental well-being is more than an absence of mental illness.

The rest of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 develops the conceptual framework. Section 3 provides a brief description of the methodology. Section 4 reports the main results. Section 5 discusses the most critical empirical results, and Section 6 summarises the major implications and limitations of this investigation.

2. Employment radiograph in the hospitality industry

2.1. Working conditions in the hospitality industry

This research claims that the hospitality industry may have more precarious working conditions than those of other industries in the service industry (Walmsley, Partington, Armstrong, & Goodwin, 2019). This presumption is due to the low productivity of the work factor that characterises the hospitality industry, thereby indicating that this industry offers many low-quality jobs. This circumstance includes everything from low qualifications and seasonal jobs to an increase in the most basic occupational groups, poor investment in training and low salaries. The hospitality industry can considerably reduce short-term unemployment in Europe, but it can eventually hinder global productivity growth. Employees who develop their entire professional career in this industry and achieve long-awaited retirement goals are generally condemned to remarkably lower pensions than the European average if they contribute for the minimum period.

Different models and approaches have been used to analyse the working conditions in the labour market. The current study adopts the model proposed by Ramos, Peiró, and Ripoll (1996), who suggest that working conditions comprise various elements that influence the different attributes of work activity. Thus, working conditions are unlimited. Ramos et al. (1996) establish seven broad categories of working conditions, namely, (a) employment conditions (e.g. contract types, work hours and shifts and wages); (b) environmental conditions (e.g. noise, temperature and vibration); (c) physical workload (e.g. postures, lifting loads and repetitive movements); (d) mental workload (e.g. work rhythms, repetitive tasks, required attention levels, consequences derived from errors, routine works and complex works); (e) psychosocial aspects and work organisation (e.g. autonomy, communication with colleagues, status and promotion possibilities, participation and knowledge required for the position); (f) safety precautions (e.g. existence of work safety committees, safety training received, information on risks and use of equipment for protection); and (g) risks and health problems. This broad-spectrum and Europe-wide study are developed using this model, which aim to verify certain working conditions attributed to the hospitality industry, particularly amongst servers.

This study also assumes the conclusions of Kusluvan et al. (2010), who conduct an exhaustive literature review that enables them to radiograph the employment offered by the hospitality industry around the seven major trends in people management in the tourism and hospitality industries. These trends are (1) employee personality and emotional intelligence, (2) emotional and aesthetic labour, (3) human resource management (HRM) practices, (4) internal marketing, (5) organisational culture and climate, (6) business and HRM strategy and (7) employee job attitudes and behaviours. The main conclusion of this review is that the hospitality industry is more precarious than other service industries. This judgment fits with the findings of Deery and Jago (2015), who claim that hospitality employees are most at risk of work difficulties and that organisations must focus on strategies to alleviate stress and exhaustion for these staff members.

The current study uses the model of Ramos et al. (1996) as a frame of reference (including many of the characteristics identified by Kusluvan et al., [2010]) and covers five different areas to show a broad view of the working conditions in the European hospitality industry.

a) Socio-demographic characteristics: female-dominated industry (generally occupying positions of low status), low-level education and skills, high proportion of non-nationals (ethnic minorities and immigrants), students and young employees.

b) Employment, environmental and physical work conditions: high proportion of illegal labour, low job security and stability (prevalence of temporal/no contract, seasonal and part-time employment; limited opportunity for career development and promotion; high percentage of employees with a second job; and low-level unionisation), low pay and benefits (low salary satisfaction, low net monthly earnings and absence of overtime pay) and small organisations and poor physical working conditions (high exposure to physical health risk factors, such as noise, vibration, high temperature, tobacco smoke and hazardous manual tasks, including tiring positions, moving heavy loads, handling angry customers and dealing with emotionally disturbing situations).

c) Psychosocial and organisational factors: long hours, routine and monotonous tasks, irregular and unsocial hours (shifts and work at night and weekend), family-unfriendly work shifts, heavy workload and stress, harsh styles of supervisors and management (respect and recognition), absence of employee empowerment and participation (supervisor support, opportunity to apply own ideas at work and ability to influence decisions), no/unprofessional employee

performance appraisal, poor co-worker attitudes, limited orientation/training and low employment status.

d) Health: Work-related injuries and illnesses (hearing problems, headaches, anxiety and overall fatigue) and violence (verbal abuse, unwanted sexual attention and humiliating behaviours).

e) Psychological well-being (poor or strong psychological well-being).

In addition to the precarious panorama presented by Kusluvan et al. (2010), Gerogiannis, Kerckhofs, and Vargas (2012) also warn that the working conditions in the hospitality industry can differ considerably from those in other service industries. Thus, we formulate the following Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. The perceived working conditions of servers are worse than those of employees from other service industries.

2.2. Working conditions and psychological well-being in the hospitality industry

Kusluvan et al. (2010) conclude that human resource practices in the hospitality industry are more unprofessional, underdeveloped and inferior than those in other industries. Such practices prevent employee commitment, satisfaction and motivation. Moreover, personnel management directly affects different employees, customers and organisational outcomes, such as turnover (Cho, Woods, Jang, & Erdem, 2006), organisational commitment (Davies, Taylor, & Savery, 2001; Garg & Dhar, 2014), job satisfaction (Jago & Deery, 2004; Suttikun, Chang, & Bicksler, 2018), service quality (Tsaur & Lin, 2004), customer satisfaction (Han, Meng, & Kim, 2017; Simons & Roberson, 2003) or organisational performance (Alleyne, Doherty, & Greenidge, 2006; Jogaratnam, 2017).

The current study investigates the effects of working conditions on psychological well-being, which is an overlooked aspect of working conditions. The homogeneous and broad-spectrum samples of previous studies have exacerbated such a limitation. The contrasting reality experienced by employees from other service industries also enables the evaluation of the working conditions faced by hospitality professionals. This evaluation can identify if such conditions are generally or specifically precarious. Thus, two different models of psychological well-being are used between both groups.

Until the 1990s, health psychology had focused on the clinical approach to health and neglected the hedonic aspects of an individual's life, which was evident when consulting the psychology manuals of that time (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 2009). Since then, studies have begun to discuss intangible and complex constructs, such as subjective well-being (Diener & Suh, 1998; Han & Yoon, 2015) or work well-being (Warr, 1990). Studies in the field of health psychology have continued expanding. Health psychology has even become a central research topic in organisational theory (Warr, 2003).

Salanova, Llorens, Cifre, Martínez, and Schaufeli (2003) explain that the psychological or affective dimension of well-being is a fundamental psychosocial process that determines the quality of work life. Psychological well-being is the result of the joint performance of certain personal and organisational factors. Therefore, its development depends on the fulfilment of certain personal needs and achievements of work objectives and pre-established plans (Anttonen & Räsänen, 2008). The emergence of different theoretical models on the psychological well-being of workers has led to remarkable advances in this field. Most of these models have been utilised from the physical, psychological or social perspectives. Such perspectives emphasise the importance of psychological well-being on health at the macrosocial and microsocial levels.

This study considers health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of illnesses or diseases, as defined by WHO. This paradigm starts from a conceptualisation of psychological well-being as a one-dimensional phenomenon. It is susceptible to evaluation in a bipolar continuum that can encompass feelings of well-being at one extreme and discomfort at the other. This approach has enabled various researchers to focus on the analysis of the relationship between work environment and psychological well-being. However, only a few studies have focused on hospitality (e.g. Babin & Boles, 1998, food services; Susskind, Kacmar, Borchgrevink, & Brymer, 2000, frontline service employees of hotels, restaurants and retail stores; Cain, Busser, & Kang, 2018, executive chefs; Zhao, Qu, & Ghiselli, 2011 and Hsu, Liu, & Tsaur, 2019, hotel employees). Most of these studies have analysed the specific issues of working conditions. Hence, the hospitality industry requires further and holistic investigations that cover a broad spectrum of working conditions. The current study analyses four dimensions, 19 subdimensions and 88 features of the working conditions amongst servers, thereby justifying the relevance of this research.

The server profession, which is one of the most representative professions in the hospitality industry, is selected as the object of this research. Such a profession is one of the most demanding and riskiest for health; servers hold a high-strain job according to the job demand–control (JDC) model of Karasek (1979). The JDC model indicates that the lowest levels of psychological well-being are experienced by workers who are subject to strong physical and psychological demands whilst experiencing reduced margins of individual autonomy and control over their daily activities. Neffa (2015) explains that servers are a clear example of people with a high-strain job. Haley-Lock (2012) examines the working conditions in the hospitality industry and employees' responses to a range of environmental pressures. These findings are the bases of the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2a. The psychological well-being of servers is determined by the working conditions offered by the hospitality industry.

Hypothesis 2b. The factors that determine the psychological well-being of servers differ from those that affect employees from other service industries.

3. Method

3.1. Sample

The sixth edition of EWCS offers a panoramic view of working conditions in different European countries, occupations, sectors and age groups (Eurofound, 2017). EWCS analyses the working conditions, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours of over 40,000 workers in 35 European countries. The results provide detailed information on exposure to physical and psychosocial risks, work organisations, work–life balance, health and well-being. In accordance with the objectives of this research, a sample of 805 servers is extracted from the population (International Standard Classification of Occupations Code 5131). Servers dispense food and beverages in dining and drinking places, clubs, institutions, canteens, board ships and passenger trains. They are included in the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (commonly referred to as NACE), particularly under NACE Code 56: food and beverage service activities. A control sample is selected to contextualise the working conditions of servers. This sample comprises 1401 employees from the other branches of the service industry (hereinafter referred to as *service workers*) and excludes those who work in the tourism and hospitality industries. These employees are from the occupations of transport conductors, hairdressers, domestic housekeepers, undertakers and embalmers, driving instructors, street food salespersons, shopkeepers, cashiers and ticket clerks, service station attendants, childcare workers, firefighters and security guards.

3.2. Measurements

Psychological well-being, as defined by the WHO-5 Well-Being Index, is used as the dependent variable of this research. The index evaluates the following aspects: positive mood (two items evaluate good spirit and relaxation, namely, [1] I have felt cheerful and been in good spirit and [2] I have felt calm and relaxed); vitality (two items evaluate being active and waking up fresh and rested, namely, [3] I have felt active and vigorous and [4] I have woken up feeling fresh and rested); and general interest (one item evaluates being interested in things, namely, [5] My daily life has been filled with things that interest me). Respondents rate the items according to the following scale: [5] All of the time, [4] Most of the time, [3] More than half of the time, [2] Less than half of the time, [1] Some of the time and [0] At no time. The total score, ranging from 0 to 25, is multiplied by 4 to obtain the final score, with 0 representing the worst imaginable well-being and 100 representing the best imaginable well-being. Subsequently, the median of the scores is used to divide the subjects into two categories, namely, poor psychological well-being (i.e. employees with psychological well-being scores between 32 and 100 points) and strong psychological well-being (i.e. employees with the highest psychological well-being between 0 and 31 points). Well-being is a life state that is influenced by different circumstances (e.g. individual, family, labour, organisational, environmental and social). For this reason, the median (32 points) of the real scores of the investigated group (servers) is used instead of the average cut-off point of the scale (50 points).

An adaptation of the model proposed by Ramos et al. (1996) is used to analyse working conditions. This model classifies working conditions into three broad categories, namely, (a) employment, environmental and physical work conditions; (b) psychosocial and organisational factors and (c) health factors.

4. Analysis and results

This research aims to deepen the understanding of the working conditions of servers in the EU in contrast to those of other service workers. Another objective is to verify the presence of certain employment characteristics that discriminate against such groups. Pearson's chi-squared test and contingency tables are used to examine the possible bivariate relationships between one group and another. A set of independent variables is grouped into the three previously presented categories together with a group of socio-demographic variables.

This analysis serves as a preparation for multivariate analysis via a logistic regression model. This second phase reveals the joint effect of independent variables on the psychological well-being of the two groups. The research further aims to identify the presence of a common core that determines the psychological well-being of both groups or establish if nuances define and differentiate the psychological well-being of one group from the other.

4.1. Bivariate analysis

Table 1 shows that the application of Pearson's chi-squared test contrasts at a significance level of 0.05. In broad terms, the results support Hypothesis 1. Firstly, significant differences in relation to the psychosocial well-being are observed because servers perceive poorer psychological well-being than service workers do. Secondly, significant differences exist between the two categories in terms of gender, age and proportion of respondents who are currently studying. By contrast, no statistically significant difference is observed amongst the remaining socio-demographic variables. Thirdly, Table 1 shows remarkable intergroup differences in the five employment, environmental and physical dimensions, namely, illegal labour, low job security and stability, low pay and benefits, small organisations and poor physical working conditions. These differences reveal higher precariousness amongst servers in all the evaluated dimensions than that amongst other workers in the service industry, with the exception of environmental conditions to which service workers declare substantial exposure. Fourthly, considerable differences in relation to the psychosocial and organisational factors of the servers' work, namely, long hours, monotonous tasks, irregular and unsocial hours, workload and stress, difficulty in balancing work and personal life, absence of employee empowerment and participation, low supervisor support, limited orientation and training and perceived low employment status are observed. By contrast, no statistically significant difference is observed in other dimensions (i.e. harsh styles of supervisors and management, no/unprofessional employee performance appraisal and poor co-worker attitudes). In sum, no significant difference is observed between both groups with respect to health, apart from a high incidence of back pain amongst service workers. Hospitality professionals perceive considerable negative conditions in terms of verbal abuse, humiliation and sexual harassment.

4.2. Multivariate analysis

A logistic regression model is subsequently developed to determine the joint effect of the distinct categories of variables (those that prove their statistically significant predictive power in the bivariate analysis) on the psychological well-being of servers and service workers. As shown in Table 1, 58 features of the working conditions are grouped in the following way: 3 socio-demographic characteristics; 27 employment, environmental and physical work conditions; 24 psychosocial and organisational factors and 4 health factors. This model aims to identify the presence of a common core of the factors that determine the psychological well-being of these individuals or the presence of nuances that differentiate and define their well-being.

Table 2 presents the results of the logistic regression. Strong validity is observed for both models (i.e. Model 1: servers and Model 2: service workers), as suggested by the contrast statistics applied to evaluate the efficiency of these models ($\chi2 = 66.373$, $p < 0.000$ for Model 1; $\chi2 = 177.497$, $p < 0.000$ for Model 2). Therefore, the psychological well-being of servers and service workers can be satisfactorily explained using the set of variables in this research. These variables have strong predictive capability through the model (as verified by comparing the observations classified correctly, in general and for each investigated group). The logistic regression model presented in Table 2 correctly classifies 74.3% of the servers (Model 1), which is a percentage that increases amongst those who declare strong psychological well-being (79.1%). By contrast, the percentage is reduced amongst those who experience poor psychological well-being (68.8%). Amongst service workers, the general classification percentage is at 71.2%, whereas the particular percentages are 75.2% (strong psychological well-being) and 66.3% (poor psychological well-being).

Table 2 shows a contrasting logistic regression model between the servers and service workers because they doubt the value of their respective works (OR: 1.859 and 1.958, respectively). They also face conscience conflicts because they have limited time left for their families (OR: 3.149 and 2.194, respectively). Other determining factors of servers' poor psychological well-being are as follows (in order of importance): contact with possibly infectious materials (OR: 5.716), verbal abuse (OR: 3.583) and limited opportunities for career development (OR: 1.888). In the case of service workers, the factors for poor psychological well-being are as follows: backaches (OR: 3.635), humiliating behaviours (OR: 2.737), impossibility of applying their own ideas in their work (OR: 2039), getting paid inappropriately (OR: 1892), emotionally disturbing situations (OR: 1.845), repetitive hand or arm movements in the main job (OR: 1.756), extensive time sitting down (OR: 1.672) and handling angry clients and customers (OR: 1.618). These results support Hypotheses 2a and 2b and are significant at the 1% level. For this level of significance, the logistic regression model indicates that other variables, which independently show a significant relationship with psychological well-being, cease their relationships when their effects are jointly assessed.

Table 1
Bivariate analysis of main variables (servers vs. service workers).
Source: Authors.

Issues	Definitions	Servers (%)	Service workers (%)	χ^2	Sig.
DEPENDENT VARIABLE					
Psychological well-being	WHO-5 Index (0: Strong psychological well-being; 1: Poor psychological well-being)	53.2–46.8	58.8–41.2	6.403	0.011
INDEPENDENT VARIABLES					
Socio-demographic characteristics					
Female-dominated sector	High proportion of female employees (0: male; 1: female)	48.6–51.4	38.1–61.9	22.954	0.000
Young employees	High proportion of young employees (0: 26+; 1: 15–25 years)	64.3–35.7	84.9–15.1	124.022	0.000
Low-level education	High proportion of employees with low-level education and skills (0: Middle/Upper; 1: Low education)	95.5–4.5	94.1–5.9	2.113	0.146
Immigrant employees	High proportion of non-nationals (0: National; 1: Non-national)	90.8–9.2	88.7–11.3	2.517	0.113
Student employees	High proportion of students (0: Otherwise; 1: Student)	93.5–6.5	98.0–2.0	29.111	0.000
Employment, environmental and physical work conditions					
Illegal labour	High proportion of illegal labour in the industry (0: Otherwise; 1: No contract)	76.8–23.2	86.7–13.3	35.461	0.000
Low job security and stability	High proportion of contract of limited duration or no contract (0: Permanent; 1: Temporal/No contract)	54.4–45.6	70.0–30.0	53.065	0.000
	You might lose your job in the next six months. (0: No; 1: Yes)	70.5–29.5	77.4–22.6	9.453	0.002
	Part-time employment (0: Full-time; 1: Part-time)	70.8–29.2	73.5–26.5	1.735	0.188
	High percentage of employees with a second job (0: Otherwise; 1: Other job)	90.8–9.2	92.5–7.5	1.905	0.168
	Limited opportunity for career development and promotion (0: Opportunities; 1: No opportunities)	37.3–62.7	46.4–53.6	12.407	0.000
	Low-level unionisation (0: Unionisation; 1: No unionisation)	9.0–91.0	33.5–66.5	155.689	0.000
Low pay and benefit	You feel you get paid appropriately. (0: Yes; 1: No)	57.5–42.5	62.1–37.9	4.483	0.046
	Net monthly earning (euros)	807.27 €	1084.03 €	8.529	0.004
	Your main job includes basic fixed salary/wage. (0: Yes; 1: No)	92.6–7.4	93.8–6.2	1.169	0.28
	Your main job includes piece rate or productivity payments. (0: Yes; 1: No)	12.3–87.7	10.0–90.0	2.764	0.096
	Your main job includes extra payments for additional hours of work/overtime. (0: Yes; 1: No)	38.4–61.6	30.3–69.7	14.871	0.000
	Your main job includes extra payments to compensate for bad/dangerous conditions. (0: Yes; 1: No)	2.4–97.6	5.7–94.3	12.881	0.000
	Your main job includes extra payments to compensate for Sunday work. (0: Yes; 1: No)	22.2–77.8	20.2–79.8	1.144	0.285
	Your main job includes payments based on your individual performance. (0: Yes; 1: No)	13.4–86.6	12.5–87.5	0.340	0.560
	Your main job includes payments based on the performance of your team/department. (0: Yes; 1: No)	6.1–93.9	5.3–94.7	0.529	0.467
	Your main job includes payments based on the overall performance of the company. (0: Yes; 1: No)	6.6–93.4	5.8–94.2	0.485	0.486
	Your main job includes income from shares in the company you work for. (0: Yes; 1: No)	2.5–97.5	2.2–97.8	0.290	0.590
	Your main job includes advantages of other nature (medical services and access to shops). (0: Yes; 1: No)	9.0–91.0	12.6–87.4	6.658	0.010
Small-sized organisations	Most employment in small/medium-sized organisations (0: 10 or more employees; 1: up to 9 employees)	34.4–65.6	57.7–42.3	110.698	0.000
Poor physical working conditions	You are exposed to vibrations from hand tools and machinery. (0: No; 1: Yes)	91.0–9.0	78.9–21.1	54.052	0.000
	You are exposed to noise so loud that you need to raise your voice to talk to people. (0: No; 1: Yes)	58.8–41.2	70.9–29.1	33.584	0.000
	You are exposed to high temperatures which make you perspire even when not working. (0: No; 1: Yes)	67.0–33.0	63.5–36.5	2.742	0.098
	You are exposed to low temperatures whether indoors or outdoors. (0: No; 1: Yes)	85.8–14.2	81.8–18.2	5.755	0.016
	You are exposed to breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust. (0: No; 1: Yes)	92.8–7.2	88.3–11.7	11.454	0.001
	You are exposed to breathing in vapours, such as solvents and thinners. (0: No; 1: Yes)	94.5–5.5	86.1–13.9	37.231	0.000
	You handle or are in skin contact with chemical products or substances. (0: No; 1: Yes)	91.5–8.5	73.3–26.7	105.195	0.000
	You are exposed to tobacco smoke from other people. (0: No; 1: Yes)	62.6–37.4	88.0–12.0	197.280	0.000
	You are exposed to handling or being in direct contact with possibly infectious materials. (0: No; 1: Yes)	94.1–5.9	86.8–13.2	29.021	0.000
	Your main job involves tiring or painful positions. (0: No; 1: Yes)	45–55.0	48.5–51.5	2.616	0.106
	Your main job involves lifting or moving people. (0: No; 1: Yes)	96.9–3.1	95.0–5.0	4.453	0.035
	Your main job involves carrying or moving heavy loads. (0: No; 1: Yes)	60.8–39.2	66.1–33.9	6.114	0.013
	Your main job involves sitting. (0: No; 1: Yes)	86.7–13.3	70.1–29.9	76.990	0.000
	Your main job involves repetitive hand or arm movements. (0: No; 1: Yes)	25.7–74.3	29.7–70.3	4.194	0.041
	Your main job involves dealing directly with people who are not employees at your workplace. (0: No; 1: Yes)	100–0	42.1–57.9	462.672	0.000
	Your main job involves handling angry clients, customers, patients and pupils. (0: No; 1: Yes)	43.2–56.8	66.5–33.5	113.080	0.000
	Your main job involves being in situations that are emotionally disturbing for you. (0: No; 1: Yes)	63.1–36.9	70.8–29.2	13.805	0.000
	Your main job involves working with computers, laptops and smartphones. (0: No; 1: Yes)	67.8–32.2	77.2–22.8	23.126	0.000
Psychosocial and organisational factors					
Long hours	Long hours of work per week (hours)	37.58	35.87	10.441	0.001
	Your main job involves typically working more than 10 h a day. (0: No; 1: Yes)	60.3–39.7	75.1–24.9	49.560	0.000

(*continued on next page*)

Table 1 (*continued*)

Issues	Definitions	Servers (%)	Service workers (%)	χ^2	Sig.
Routine and monotonous tasks	Your main job involves monotonous tasks. (0: No; 1: Yes)	42.6–57.4	49.2–50.8	8.903	0.003
	Your main job involves short repetitive tasks of less than 1 min (0: No; 1: Yes)	62.0–38.0	69.3–30.7	12.067	0.001
	Your main job involves short repetitive tasks of less than 10 min (0: No; 1: Yes)	47.7–52.3	55.3–44.7	11.438	0.001
Irregular hours	Do you work the same number of hours every day? (0: Yes; 1: No)	51.6–48.4	66.9–33.1	49.997	0.000
	Do you work the same number of days every week? (0: Yes; 1: No)	67.3–32.7	75.9–24.1	19.223	0.000
	Do you work the same number of hours every week? (0: Yes; 1: No)	55.0–45.0	69.8–30.2	48.724	0.000
	Do you work fixed starting and finishing times? (0: Yes; 1: No)	57.6–42.4	69.4–30.6	31.64	0.000
	Do you work shifts? (0: No; 1: Yes)	51.9–48.1	70.4–29.6	75.508	0.000
Unsocial hours	Do you work … ? At night, for at least 2 h between 10.00 p.m. and 05.00 a.m.? (0: No; 1: Yes)	52.5–47.5	80.9–19.1	198.522	0.000
	Do you work … ? Sundays or Saturdays (0: No; 1: Yes)	11.3–88.7	33.5–66.5	132.685	0.000
Family unfriendly work shifts	How do your working hours fit in with your family/social commitments? (0: Well; 1: Not well)	72.4–27.6	79.4–20.6	14.154	0.000
	Your job prevents you from providing the time you want to give your family. (0: No; 1: Yes)	56.5–43.5	65.4–34.6	16.872	0.000
Heavy workload and stress	You have sufficient time to get the job done. (0: Yes; 1: No)	69.4–30.6	78.9–21.1	25.028	0.000
	You experience stress in your work. (0: No; 1: Yes)	20.6–69.4	41.8–58.2	27.285	0.000
Harsh styles of supervisors and management	Your immediate boss respects you as a person. (0: Yes; 1: No)	94.6–5.4	95.1–4.9	0.326	0.568
	Your immediate boss gives you praise and recognition when you do a good job. (0: Yes; 1: No)	85.4–14.6	86.5–13.5	0.486	0.487
	Your immediate boss successfully gets people to work together. (0: Yes; 1: No)	88.4–11.6	90.5–9.5	1.978	0.160
	Your immediate boss is helpful in getting the job done. (0: Yes; 1: No)	82.7–17.3	80.3–19.7	1.531	0.216
Absence of employee empowerment and participation	Your immediate boss encourages and supports your development. (0: Yes; 1: No)	82.7–17.3	86.2–13.8	4.020	0.046
	You are consulted before objectives are set for your work. (0: Yes; 1: No)	56.7–43.3	66.3–33.7	18.967	0.000
	You are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes. (0: Yes; 1: No)	60.5–39.5	65.3–34.7	4.844	0.028
	You have a say in the choice of your work colleagues. (0: Yes; 1: No)	38.0–62.0	38.2–61.8	0.006	0.937
	You can apply your own ideas in your work. (0: Yes; 1: No)	67.6–32.4	79.9–20.1	40.665	0.000
	You can influence decisions that are important for your work. (0: Yes; 1: No)	60.1–39.9	68.6–31.4	15.932	0.000
No/unprofessional employee performance appraisal	Your immediate boss provides useful feedback on your work. (0: Yes; 1: No)	86.5–13.5	86.5–13.5	0.001	0.975
Poor co-worker attitudes	A good cooperation happens between you and your colleagues. (0: Yes; 1: No)	96.1–3.9	97.3–2.7	2.305	0.129
Limited orientation/training	You need further training to cope well with your duties. (0: No; 1: Yes)	93.2–6.8	89.7–10.3	7.672	0.006
	Have you undergone any training paid by your employer? (0: Yes; 1: No)	12.9–87.1	24.7–75.3	43.531	0.000
Low employment status	You doubt the importance of your work. (0: No; 1: Yes)	63.1–36.9	73.2–26.8	24.615	0.000
Health factors					
Work-related injuries, work-related illness and violence	Do you think your health or safety is at risk because of your work?	83.0–17.0	79.6–20.4	3.551	0.060
	Hearing problems (0: No; 1: Yes)	95.8–4.2	95.4–4.6	0.210	0.646
	Skin problems (0: No; 1: Yes)	91.9–8.1	92.1–7.9	0.033	0.857
	Backache (0: No; 1: Yes)	64.6–35.4	55.1–44.9	19.147	0.000
	Muscular pains in shoulders, neck and/or upper limbs (0: No; 1: Yes)	59.9–40.1	55.7–44.3	3.568	0.059
	Muscular pains in lower limbs (0: No; 1: Yes)	61.4–38.6	60.8–39.2	0.065	0.799
	Headaches, eyestrain (0: No; 1: Yes)	68.0–32.0	67.5–32.5	0.078	0.780
	Injury(ies) (0: No; 1: Yes)	91.7–8.3	92.7–7.3	0.846	0.358
	Anxiety (0: No; 1: Yes)	87.3–12.7	85.1–14.9	2.032	0.154
	Overall fatigue (0: No; 1: Yes)	58.8–41.2	61.9–38.1	1.953	0.162
	Verbal abuse (0: No; 1: Yes)	86.1–13.9	91.1–8.9	13.188	0.000
	Unwanted sexual attention (0: No; 1: Yes)	90.7–9.3	96.6–3.4	33.725	0.000
	Threats (0: No; 1: Yes)	95.9–4.1	97.1–2.9	2.188	0.139
	Humiliating behaviours (0: No; 1: Yes)	90.0–10.0	92.7–7.3	4.905	0.027

Table 2
Logistic regression: factors determining psychological well-being (confidence intervals for the odds ratio).
Source: Authors.

Variables in the model	Model 1 (Servers) OR (IC) (*)	Model 2 (Service workers) OR (IC)
Employment, environmental and physical work conditions		
Limited opportunity for career development and promotion (0: Opportunities; 1: No opportunities)	1.888 (1.096–3.252)	
You feel you get paid appropriately. (0: Yes; 1: No)		1.892 (1.273–2.813)
You handle or are in direct contact with possibly infectious materials. (0: No; 1: Yes)	5.716 (1.391–23.486)	
Your main job involves sitting. (0: No; 1: Yes)		1.672 (1.086–2.573)
Your main job involves repetitive hand or arm movements. (0: No; 1: Yes)		1.756 (1.090–2.830)
Your main job involves handling angry clients, customers, patients and pupils. (0: No; 1: Yes)		1.618 (1.051–2.490)
Your main job involves being in situations that are emotionally disturbing for you. (0: No; 1: Yes)		1.845 (1.176–2.896)
Psychosocial and organisational factors		
Your job prevents you from providing the time you want to give your family. (0: No; 1: Yes)	3.149 (1.890–5.248)	2.194 (1.456–3.306)
You can apply your own ideas in your work. (0: Yes; 1: No)		2.039 (1.236–3.364)
You doubt the importance of your work. (0: No; 1: Yes)	1.859 (1.090–3.168)	1.958 (1.247–3.074)
Health factors		
Backache (0: No; 1: Yes)		3.635 (2.443–5.409)
Verbal abuse (0: No; 1: Yes)	3.583 (1.720–7.461)	
Humiliating behaviours (0: No; 1: Yes)		2.737 (1.189–6.299)
Constant	0.220	0.061
χ2 efficiency test (complete model)	66.373	177.497
Degree of freedom	5	12
Level of meaning	0.000	0.000
Correct % of prediction		
Complete model	74.3%	71.2%
Poor psychological well-being	68.8%	66.3%
Strong psychological well-being	79.1%	75.2%

5. Discussion and conclusion

Employees are human capitals and strategic resources for the success of the hospitality industry. This statement is particularly relevant in industries with direct customer contact. A wide spectrum of empirical studies has been conducted at the European level. The current study verifies that the working conditions of servers (as key workers in the hospitality industry) differ from those of employees in other service industries. The model of Ramos et al. (1996) is adopted, and four different dimensions (including 19 subdimensions and 88 characteristics) are covered to analyse the working conditions of servers in Europe.

In the first phase, we conduct Pearson's chi-squared test and produce contingency tables to compare both groups. The findings lead to two main conclusions. On the one hand, the precariousness attributed to the hospitality industry in one of its highly relevant and visible professions is confirmed. On the other hand, servers' working conditions are unnecessarily more precarious than those of the remaining employees of the service industry. However, this study finds significant differences in certain respects. The most remarkable of such differences are as follows.

Firstly, with respect to employment, we observe that illegal work, lack of job security and unfavourable compensation and benefit policies are the most frequent amongst servers. This finding accentuates a problem already highlighted by Gerogiannis et al. (2012), who explain that undeclared work is most frequent in household service (19%), construction (16%), personal service (9%) and hotels and restaurants (8%). Moreover, the lack of job security is prevalent in the service industry. The incidence of temporary contracts is higher in the hospitality industry than in the entire economic landscape (Fernández & Pena-Boquete, 2007). The current context favours low-level affiliation with trade unions (Gerogiannis et al., 2012) to the point that hotels are making labour flexible via employment agencies or labour brokers that hire and contract work to other companies (Edralin, 2014). Edralin (2014) explains that the last purpose seeks to reduce regular workers or prevent these workers' regularisation by weakening unions or preventing unionisation. Poor pay is another main characteristic of the industry (Michailids & Elwkai, 2003), thereby translating into job dissatisfaction related to pay (Ghiselli, La Lopa, & Bai, 2001). Such a compensation policy is conditioned by wage control on industry competitiveness to the extent that the typical practice is to pay at or near the prevailing legal minimum wage (Haley-Lock, 2012).

Secondly, we note that servers face worse physical working conditions than other service workers but not worse environmental conditions. The former is also forced to move heavy loads, make repetitive hand or arm movements, deal with people and employees in other companies, handle angry customers and manage emotionally disturbing situations. These results are consistent with those of the European multisectoral study of Jettinghoff and Houtman (2009), which shows that the ergonomic conditions of hotel and restaurant employees are worse than those of employees in 25 other activity sectors. Certain physical demands of hospitality jobs, such as the manual lifting of heavy loads (Iun & Huang, 2007), have been discussed extensively in the literature. In addition to the high physical demands of the work, direct contact with customers forces hospitality employees to perform emotional, mental and manual labour (Mutari & Figart, 2016; Shani, Uriely, Reichel, & Ginsburg, 2014). Table 1 clearly notes that servers experience better environmental work conditions than other service workers do, except for exposure to noise and second-hand tobacco smoke.

Thirdly, notable differences are also observed between the psychosocial and organisational factors that affect servers. On average, servers work 2 h per week more than other employees do (i.e. 37.58 versus 35.87 h). Having long working hours is common amongst hospitality professionals (Fernández & Pena-Boquete, 2007; Michailids & Elwkai, 2003; Poulston, 2008) despite being a highly polarised industry in the low and high ends of the working time scale. This fact is due to the prominent levels of part-time work that has increased in several European countries (Gerogiannis et al., 2012). Servers' tasks are routine-based and monotonous, although Cain et al. (2018) warn that certain levels of autonomy and creativity are important for executive chefs to attain well-being and life satisfaction. Their workday is developed irregularly (i.e. shifts, unsocial hours and work at night). These outcomes confirm the conclusion of Jettinghoff and Houtman (2009) that the nonstandard working hours of hotel and restaurant employees are more frequent than those of employees in other industries. Servers also feel they have insufficient time to do their jobs in comparison with other

surveyed respondents. Consequently, 7 out of 10 servers suffer from stress owing to work overload, and 27.6% of servers admit to difficulties in harmonising work and family. This theme is a main area of interrogation for hospitality academics due to its influence on retaining talented staff (Deery & Jago, 2015).

Fourthly, various studies have highlighted the health consequences of the working conditions offered by organisations. Table 1 shows the main health problems suffered by servers (e.g. backache, overall fatigue and muscular pain). However, no significant difference is observed between the two groups, except in relation to backaches, which have a high incidence amongst the members of the control group. Other studies have confirmed the low incidence rate of fatal accidents amongst hospitality employees (e.g. Gerogiannis et al., 2012; Michailids & Elwkai, 2003). These conclusions refute the approach of Edralin (2014), who states that precarious labour influences health and safety because employees experience toxic or stressful psychosocial working conditions that are detrimental to their personal wellness and workplace safety. Significant differences appear in relation to the most humiliating treatment received by servers compared with other respondents (e.g. verbal abuse, humiliating behaviours or unwanted sexual attention). Ariza-Montes, Arjona-Fuentes, Law, and Han (2017) obtained a prevalent workplace bullying rate of 5.6% amongst a sample of 2125 hospitality employees. This rate is higher than the general rate amongst European employees (4.2%). Examples of other studies that have confirmed that this phenomenon is strongly associated with hospitality work include those of Meloury and Signal (2014), Mathisen, Einarsen, and Mykletun (2008), Poulston (2007), Hoel (2002) and Gilbert, Guerrier, and Guy (1998).

Lastly, with regard to the central variable of this research, 46.8% of the servers declare a poor level of psychological well-being, which is over five percentage points above those recognised by service workers. This fact can be caused by the poor working conditions that are generally faced by the investigated hospitality professionals. Good jobs provide access to resources that enable people to achieve well-being (Mutari & Figart, 2016). Our research verifies the previous literature, which suggests that the psychological well-being of servers can be exacerbated by the nature of the industry regarding aspects such as career progression (Roan & Diamond, 2003), work–family conflicts (Deery & Jago, 2009), poor social status of a job (Wildes, 2005), workplace bullying (Poulston, 2008) or environmental working conditions (Siegel, Barbeau, & Osinubi, 2006).

We apply different logistic regression models in the second phase of the empirical research. Specifically, we state that servers' psychological well-being depends on the working conditions that are offered by the industry. The factors that promote the psychological well-being of these professionals differ from those that affect the remaining service industry employees. In the first logistic regression model presented in Table 2, servers' poor psychological well-being is influenced by two factors that are related to employment, environmental and physical work conditions (i.e. the few opportunities offered by the industry for career development and promotion and the exposure and direct contact with materials that can be infectious). Two other factors are of a psychosocial and organisational nature (i.e. servers consider that the peculiarities of their employment prevent them from devoting ample time for their families, and they doubt the importance of their work). The final factor is linked to health, namely, the verbal abuse endured by these professionals that deteriorates their psychological well-being. The relationship of workplace bullying with well-being has also been shown by Hsu et al. (2019) by using a sample of 310 entry-level employees of international tourism hotels in Taiwan and by Giousmpasoglou, Marinakou, and Cooper (2018) in a study of 54 Michelin starred chefs in Great Britain and Ireland.

To our knowledge, none of the previous studies have revealed the combination of organisational factors, which determine the poor psychological well-being of servers in general, particularly in Europe. A variable that individually shows no significant difference between servers and service workers, namely, exposure to handling or being in direct contact with materials that can be infectious, has an intense effect on the probability of developing poor psychological well-being. A server exposed to this health risk is nearly six times more likely to experience poor psychological well-being than the one who has not been in contact with this type of materials.

The logistic regression model of service workers generally differs from that of servers. Moreover, the comparison of the logistic regressions in Table 2 reveals only two variables that are common to both models, namely, (a) servers and service workers doubt the importance of their jobs and (b) workers feel resentful and guilty because of the limited time they spend with their families. Specificities typical to the poor psychological well-being of service workers are added to these common factors. Psychological well-being is low because service workers feel that they are poorly paid, are subjected to poor physical working conditions (e.g. they spend many hours sitting, perform repetitive hand or arm movements, deal with angry customers or are in emotionally disturbing situations), regret their scarce empowerment because they cannot apply their own ideas in their work, suffer from back pain and are subjected to humiliating behaviours. Despite the common core that amalgamates both models, profound nuances that differentiate and define the degree of psychological well-being experienced by servers and service workers can definitely be observed.

In conclusion, the previous findings may explain the poor image of employment in the industry, thereby translating into a low employment status. A total of 36.9% of servers doubt the importance of their work, which is a ratio reduced to 26.8% amongst the members of the control group. The image of the industry constitutes a serious threat to its own survival. Work develops a sense of dignity and purpose in life. Therefore, the social stigma of working in the hospitality industry (Wildes, 2005) leads to the industry's unattractiveness, which hinders the recruitment of motivated and qualified workers (Gerogiannis et al., 2012).

This investigation provides strong implications for the European hospitality industry. First is the working conditions offered by the industry and their direct effects on the psychological well-being of servers. In this sense, this research contributes to the advancement of the scientific knowledge of a profession that is critical to the success of the hospitality industry. The model of Ramos et al. (1996) is tested, for the first time, to a significant occupational group of the hospitality industry. That is, the seven categories of working conditions established by these authors at the European level are verified.

Second is the use of a homogeneous sample of data belonging to a group of workers at the European level (805 servers). This homogeneous sample gives the work great research strength (Janssen et al., 2001), considering that servers play one of the most important roles in the hospitality industry because they are at the forefront of the industry.

Third is that this work does not focus on specific points but covers extensive working conditions against the control group (i.e. 1401 service workers). This broad coverage provides an immense value and meaning to the results. An important research gap is solved by interconnecting, with a broad-spectrum holistic study, working conditions that had previously been studied separately. That is, we analyse 4 dimensions, 19 subdimensions and 88 characteristics of working conditions amongst servers. Quantitative methodologies, especially logistic regression models, are used to analyse the large sample size, which allows us to link working conditions with a result variable (psychological well-being).

Fourth is that our research has responded to one of the main challenges of the hospitality industry by offering scientific knowledge about its structure, the essence of the work, the characteristics of employees and their needs and expectations. In this sense, we can affirm that this work offers a 'profile' of the working conditions of the servers of the European hospitality industry. We empirically verify the theoretical proposal of Gerogiannis et al. (2012) that the working conditions in the

hospitality industry differ substantially from the working conditions in other service industries.

Fifth is that the study analyses the relationship between the working environment and psychological well-being, thereby filling the existing gap due to the lack of studies of this type, especially in hospitality (Babin & Boles, 1998). Psychological well-being is conceptualised as a one-dimensional phenomenon susceptible of evaluation in a bipolar continuum (feelings of well-being in one extreme and discomfort in the other).

Sixth is that this research is one of the first to analyse the effects of working conditions on psychological well-being by using homogeneous and broad-spectrum samples. From this study, psychological well-being can be satisfactorily explained using working conditions.

Seventh is derived from the comparison of different models of psychological well-being for hospitality servers with those of other service sectors. Correctly classified observations are compared, in general and for each group investigated. This comparison gives the model a strong predictive capacity.

Eighth is that the previous literature is verified by concluding that the psychological well-being of servers may be exacerbated by the nature of industry in aspects, such as career progression (Roan & Diamond, 2003), work–family conflicts (Deery & Jago, 2009), poor social state of a job (Wildes, 2005), intimidation in the workplace (Poulston, 2008) or environmental working conditions (Siegel et al., 2006). Significant differences are observed in relation to psychosocial well-being because servers perceive poorer psychological well-being than service workers do. This greater precariousness of the servers than that of other workers in the service sector is observed in all the dimensions evaluated, except in environmental conditions.

This work confirms the precariousness of the servers, as one of the most relevant professions in the hotel industry. This precariousness is reflected in the psychological malaise of these servers that is superior to that of other sectors of the service sector. Therefore, the first implication of this work must be to solve this precariousness. To this end, we recommend that these companies adopt a leadership approach to improve the psychological well-being of servers (Van Dierendonck, 2011), applying the elements of the Leadership of Servers Theory (Greenleaf, 1977; Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008; Van Dierendonck, 2011). This study also reveals that the causes of servers' low psychological well-being are that they perceive that they are poorly paid, are subject to poor physical working conditions, regret their lack of empowerment because they cannot apply their own ideas in their work, suffer from back pain and are subject to humiliating behaviours. To solve these aspects, we recommend that managers in the hotel and catering sector jointly handle working conditions, thus maximising their potential in different areas. We propose, in line with Koyuncu, Burke, Astakhova, Eren, and Cetin (2014), to use the server leadership approach to solve aspects such as seasonality at work, long and irregular working hours and monotonous tasks. In addition, we propose to combine this approach with the promotion of server participation in organisational decisions (Bani-Melhem, Zeffane, & Albaity, 2018; Jiménez-Jiménez & Sanz-Valle, 2005) and the use of high-performance human resource practices. We affirm that the binomial welfare of servers and the quality of service are two indispensable elements in the competitiveness of the hotel industry. Managers in the hospitality industry must develop their human capital to become competitive. To achieve this objective, we recommend managers to improve self-development, enhance self-motivation of followers (Van Dierendonck, 2011) and continue to foster responsiveness and reaction to changes and new demands in a competitive climate (Slåtten & Mehmetoglu, 2011). We also propose to focus on improving innovation capacity (Ruiz-Palomino, Hernández-Perlines, Jiménez-Estévez, & Gutiérrez-Broncano, 2019) and thereby develop managers' competitiveness level on the basis of the innovation in products/services and processes (Hernández-Perlines, Ariza-Montes, Han, & Law, 2019). Managers in the hospitality industry must also consider employee participation in decision making to achieve their integration in the fulfilment of their company's mission. This high consideration of workers in decision making implies the application of new approaches in the management of human resources, such as the establishment of adequate communication channels, the analysis and description of adequate jobs, the use of optimal systems for evaluation and remuneration of work done with monetary and non-monetary recognition and the specification of career plans. We recommend applying 'high-performance practices.' In addition, hotel managers should be aware that they must adopt new approaches to human capital management to improve their competitiveness (Sobaih, Ibrahim, & Gabry, 2019). In this new scenario, companies have an exceptional ally, which is information and communications technology (Berné, García-González, García-Uceda, & Múgica, 2015).

Overall, working conditions are one of the most critical issues in the hospitality industry. This research has made a theoretically meaningful improvement by successfully scrutinising the working conditions of servers on the basis of the quantitative approach. The study has satisfactorily deepened our knowledge regarding the linkage between working conditions and psychological well-being. Our findings can be helpful for subsequent research on servers' working conditions and well-being perception.

6. Limitations and future research

Despite the undeniable scientific interest in the results presented in this paper, several methodological restrictions must be considered. On the one hand, psychological well-being has been measured through self-perception. Hence, possible biases in the dependent variable should be assumed. On the other hand, causal relationships between psychological well-being and independent factors must be relativised, particularly because of the cross-sectional design of this investigation. Conducting a longitudinal study constitutes a future line of research. Another purpose is to focus on self-employment, specifically given the weight it represents in several European countries, such as Belgium, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Future research can also analyse the working conditions in independent or family-owned businesses and their differences from large corporations of chain restaurants. Another theme of interest is to investigate if people management in family businesses shows a more humane vision than that in franchise chains because these companies tend to follow strict rules and procedures that dehumanise employees.

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