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QUALITY OF WORKING LIFE AND ENGAGEMENT IN AN
EVOLVING HOSPITALITY SUBSECTOR: THE CASE OF HOSTELS

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Project submitted as partial requirement for the conferral of

Master in Hospitality and Tourism Management

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July, 2013

ISCTE ◇ Business School

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Abstract

Hostels' competitiveness relies strongly on the unique genuineness in service and thus counts on employees that are actively creating a social and welcoming environment, while at the same time caring about the company. However, the trend of hostels becoming more upscale might compromise the genuineness in service as the employees face pressure to become more normative. Retaining employees that care about the company (e.g. positive voice behavior) implies engaging them and also providing high quality of working life, particularly with a room to be creative.

Taking these variables as central in dealing with the current trends in the hostel industry, we tested a model with a sample of 98 employees from Lisbon hostels, in which engagement mediates the relation between quality of working life and voice behavior. Findings support the hypothesized model showing that one of the work engagement dimensions (dedication) fully mediates the relation between quality of working life (creativity) and voice.

Resumo

A competitividade dos hosteis assenta fortemente na genuinidade do serviço e em contar com colaboradores que criam ativamente um ambiente acolhedor e social ao mesmo tempo que se preocupam com a empresa. Contudo, a tendência observada de oferecer serviços superiores e mais sofisticados pressionam o comportamento dos colaboradores para se tornarem mais normativos, o que pode comprometer a genuinidade que os caracteriza. Reter colaboradores que se preocupam com a empresa (e.g. com comportamento de voz positiva) implica envolvê-los no trabalho, e prover uma elevada qualidade de vida no trabalho, especialmente um espaço para serem criativos.

Tomando estas variáveis como centrais para lidar com as tendências atuais nos hosteis, testámos um modelo, com uma amostra de 98 colaboradores de hosteis em Lisboa, no qual o envolvimento no trabalho medeia a relação entre a qualidade de vida no trabalho e o comportamento de voz. Os resultados corroboram o modelo hipotetizado mostrando que uma das dimensões do envolvimento (dedicação) medeia totalmente a relação entre a qualidade de vida no trabalho (criatividade) e o comportamento de voz.

Palavras-chave: Hostels, Hotelaria, Qualidade da Vida no Trabalho, Backpackers

JEL Classificação: M100 Business Administration: General, **M120** Personnel Management;

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Nelson Ramalho, whose advice and encouragement were invaluable during the learning process that resulted in this master's thesis.

Equally important, my appreciation goes to the Lisbon hostel industry – the project became far more interesting due to your excellent cooperation! Thank you to all those managers and employees who took part in the study and shared their insights on the industry.

Executive Summary

The aim of the present study is to examine the relation between the quality of working life, employee engagement, and behavioral options at work in the hostel industry. In the past decade, the hostel industry has undergone considerable evolvement – many hostels are now more upscale, thus offering convincing alternatives to hotels, but without the price tag. However, this trend of "boutique" and "designer" hostels might compromise the key competitive advantage of the hostels: the unique genuineness in service. Thus, maintaining the sociable and family-like ambiance requires engaged employees who also care about the company (e.g. give constructive feedback).

Considering these aspects, we tested a model with a sample of 98 employees from Lisbon hostels, in which engagement mediates the relation between quality of working life and voice behavior. The methodology employed in this study consists of two complementary phases, one qualitative and the other quantitative. The former one was designed to capture the reality of hostels and hostel HRM by interviewing managers and employees currently working in the sector. These interviews were then subjected to content analysis, and the insights thus gained were used as a basis for a survey to be completed by employees. The survey comprehends the QWL scale by Sirgy et al (2001), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES, Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003), and the Behavioral options at work measure from Rusbult et al. (1988), which we adapted on the basis of insights gained from the interviews.

The results supported the hypothesized model in that one of the employee engagement dimensions (dedication) fully mediates the relation between one dimension of quality of working life (creativity) and voice behavior. Thus, in order to foster positive employee behaviors (i.e. voicing suggestions and concerns in a constructive way) one of the key objectives of hostel HRM should be to provide a working environment where creativity, as an expression of quality of working life, is nurtured, leading to dedication, which then encourage the employees' voice in searching for better ways of serving customers.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

1. Introduction

The hospitality industry, particularly the lodging sector, is an evolving industry where trends and customer demands are changing rapidly. One recent trend is that the European hostels have become more upscale, now catering to a customer segment no longer limited to youth travelers. This evolution is largely explained by the European economic slowdown; however, despite the slumping economy, customers still expect the same level of service and luxury. This has created a demand for boutique style budget accommodation (Sherwood, 2013).Simultaneously, customers are increasingly looking for more authentic travel experiences as well as sociability, and thus opt for hostels as their choice of accommodation (Hecht & Martin, 2006).

Portugal is one of the pioneering countries in launching upscale hostels. Lisbon hostels in particular have received a fair amount of attention due to their continuous success in the international "Hoscar Awards" – awards created by Hostelworld.com, a leading online booking site for hostels worldwide. The hostel industry in Portugal is a recent one, dating back no further than 2005, when the first hostel – Lisbon Lounge in the Baixa district – was opened (Golisbon.com/hostels/). Since then, the number of hostels in Lisbon has increased rapidly. A web search on Hostelworld.com with the options "Portugal", "Lisbon" and "Hostels" returns 48 results, whereas in 2009 the same search identified only 21 hostels (Volante, 2011).

Considering the rising standard of the European hostels, it is apparent that they are bound to face new challenges with regards to managing their human resources. The customers' expectations create twofold demands for the hostels' employees: they need to be able to provide high quality service while maintaining the authenticity of the hostel environment. The increasing quality and rising standards, in other words, does not mean that hostels have begun to imitate the formality of hotels' customer service – instead, hostels can be considered trendsetters in the lodging industry as they are responding to emerging customer needs (Edwards, 2006). In any case, despite a certain level of formality, service quality is a key aspect in achieving and sustaining competitive advantage in the hospitality industry.

Relatively few studies, if any, have been conducted in relation to HRM in hostels. The existing studies identifying HRM best practices in the hospitality industry have been conducted in relation to large international hotel chains and other benchmark hospitality organizations (Enz & Siguaw, 2000). Additionally, there are a few recent studies (unpublished master's theses) on the Portuguese hostel industry, but their focus has either been on the marketing aspect (e.g. Coelho, 2011; Volante, 2011) or backpackers as a customer segment (e.g. Marques, 2012; Rebelo, 2012). It has also been acknowledged that a scarcity of research exists on the Portuguese tourism sector and in particular with regards to the quality of management practices (Costa, 2004).

If a hospitality provider is to be able to respond to customer demands and provide high quality service – be it formal or more family-like – it has to have motivated and engaged employees. Indeed, employee motivation is one the most important aspects of HRM and previous research has also identified it as a key mediator between HRM and firm performance (e.g. Becker et al., 1997). The reasons for this are obvious: employees are the ones delivering the service to customers, whose contentment is related to profits for the company (Crawford & Hubbard, 2008). Thus, a concept that gains importance in any motivation-centered research, particularly in the services sector, is employee rewards (covering the full range of tangible and intangible elements).

Linking together the current hostel circumstances and the HRM related variables implies that more emphasis should be placed on (1) how hostels' employees experience work and rewards (e.g. quality of working life), (2) how the work engages them (e.g. job engagement) and (3) how these variables affect the critical behavioral decisions employees make on a daily basis. Hence, the goal of this study is to test this mediation model (quality of working life – work engagement – behavioral options at work) in the hostel industry.

2. Literature review

In order to define the underlying theoretical rationale for the present study, the literature review will start by focusing on the concept of hostels and the background of the hostel industry, and then move to characterizing the human resources management in the hospitality industry in general and more specifically in the hostel industry. Finally, work motivation and rewards deserve a particular attention due to their centrality in HRM in this context.

2.1 Hostels

2.1.1   Hostel background and concept

Since the opening of the first youth hostels in the 1930s, the norm has evolved far from the negative associations of communal style living – crammed dormitories, uncomfortable bunk beds and minimal facilities – and become more upscale (Brown, 2004; Papis, 2006). Youth hostels have even been described as "cheerful alternatives to hotels" (Swift, 2002, p.12). As with other areas of travel and tourism, hostels' customers are increasingly looking for unique experiences. Hence, now it is possible to find "boutique" and "designer" hostels all around the world. Hostels are now regularly designed by interior architects (e.g.*Oops!,* the first designer hostel in Paris by interior architect Philippe Maidenberg), are eco-friendly or converted from old buildings (e.g. *HI – Boston Hostel*, a LEED[1]Certified hostel converted from an aging industrial building or *Youthpalace* in Davos, a hostel located in a former sanatorium in the Swiss mountains) and represent some of the newest design trends (e.g. *Borges Design Hostel* in Buenos Aires, epitomizing the hottest design trends in a 1920s era building). Clearly, a hostel is becoming harder to distinguish from a hotel it is becoming less apparent what distinguishes a hostel from a hotel, but the most obvious difference remains that hostels represent some form of communal living(Dodson, 2008; Edwards, 2006; Hall, 2012).

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[1]LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. LEED is a program that provides third-party verification of green buildings (U.S. Green Building Council, 2013).

The form of hostel accommodation was originally targeted towards young, budget minded, independent travelers – "backpackers" (Chitty, Ward & Chua, 2007). More specifically, "backpackers" are defined as a diverse group of individuals ranging from young adults seeking for a "rite of passage" to people in their 20s and 30s taking up an opportunity for a long-term travel (O'Reilly, 2006; Shaffer, 2010). The clientele of hostels still consist mostly of these young travelers, but also older travelers and families are increasingly taking advantage of communal style accommodation, which places greater demands on accommodation providers to improve services and add value in order to remain competitive (Hecht & Martin, 2006; Brown, 2004). The majority of research conducted on this particular niche market has taken place in Australia and New Zealand. The more recent studies suggest that the backpacker market consists of two main sub segments: youth tourism backpackers between the ages 15 and 29 and the contemporary backpackers – 30 years and older (Hecht & Martin, 2006).

The broadening of the customer segment identifying as backpackers implies that the concept of backpacking has changed; backpacking is now less about chronological age and more about travel style choice (Hecht & Martin, 2006). Initially, backpacking was seen as an alternative to mainstream, institutionalized tourism and the backpackers were referred to as "drifters", "nomads", "wanderers" or "long-term budget travelers" (Uriely, Yonau & Simchai, 2002). Nowadays, backpackers are very much part of the institutionalized mass-tourism and backpacking is rather a subcategory of tourism than an alternative to it (Cohen, 2003). In fact, by now there are also subcategories of backpackers. One of these subcategories is the "flashpackers", referring to generally older backpackers, who have more disposable income and take greater advantage of technology (Paris, 2012). The increasing customer expectations with regards to budget accommodation are now being realized by hotel chains as well. For instance, Accor Hotels is the first one to develop their own hostel chain called The Base Backpackers (Edwards, 2006; Hecht & Martin, 2006).

On the whole, the customer segment that can be defined as backpackers is increasing in size and importance. For example, in Australia according to the March 2012 International Visitor Survey, 10% (552,000) of all international visitors to Australia were classified as backpackers, altogether spending 43 million nights. In the survey, backpackers were defined according to the accommodation used rather than purpose of visit (Tourism Research Australia, 2012). The growing importance of the backpacker

segment is slowly being acknowledged in other parts of the world as well. For instance, in Britain backpackers also account for approximately 10% of all overseas visitors, thus representing a future potential market. However, in Europe there is a significant lack of research with regard to the backpacker segment (Nash, Thyne & Davies, 2006). Furthermore, the overall growth of the youth tourism segment should be taken into account when analyzing the evolvement hostel accommodation. Youth tourists represent of the one fastest growing markets on a global scale: in 2010, the proportion of young travelers was around 20% of the total 940 million international tourists. This meant 165 billion USD towards global tourism receipts (UNWTO-WYSE, 2011).

2.2 Hospitality and hostel human resources management

In order to understand Hostel HRM, one must first possess a good grasp of the broader Hospitality HRM. In the hospitality industry, a common conception is that excellence is achieved through a dedicated and engaged workforce. Benchmark hospitality organizations have captured this idea in their culture: for instance Ritz-Carlton Hotels, Four Seasons Hotels, Southwest Airlines and Disney were ranked among the ten best travel companies to work for in the Glassdoor.com report (based on employee reviews from May 2011 through May 2012) (Smith, 2012). Hence, the majority of the hospitality organizations struggle to attract, develop and retain qualified workforce. However, hospitality employees are also often overworked and underpaid, lack qualifications and continuous training programs and rarely experience empowerment and intrinsic rewards in their work (Costa, 2004; Tesone, 2008). Thus, effective HRM becomes crucial in a "people focused" industry such as that of hospitality (Cetinel, Yolal & Emeksiz, 2009).

The human resources challenges arise from various aspects of the industry. Firstly, the environment in hospitality organizations is constantly changing, thus requiring managers to strike a balance between coordinating tasks and allowing for ad hoc problem solving in a given situation (Ogaard et al., 2008). The coordination of tasks is essential in order to maintain consistency in service. Yet delegating a significant amount of authority to employees is also critical, as the behavior of customer service representatives is directly related to customer satisfaction (Matzler et al., 2004; Wieseke

et al., 2011). This is almost an axiom, as they are the key personnel representing the firm, and thus responsible for personalizing the service as well as coping with service failures (Boshoff & Allen, 2000; Ford & Heaton, 2001). However, recent studies have also indicated some contradictory evidence. For example, Chan & Lam (2011) suggest that more empowerment might in fact decrease employees' service performance due to increased workload and anxiety.

Secondly, hospitality industry is characterized by part-time employment as well as high turnover (Lundberg, Gudmundson & Anderson, 2008). As mentioned, many service organizations are required to decide on the appropriate level of standardization and efficiency in their service; more customization obviously means less efficiency (Ogaard et al., 2008).For example, the business system of McDonald's is based on high standardization of products and services, where a crucial part of the system is to have "young, inexperienced people to say the same words: Hello, welcome to McDonald's"(Kiyosaki, 2011, p.36). A high degree of standardization might thus come as a trade-off for motivated and committed employees (Ogaard et al., 2008). The nature of the industry also shapes the way it is viewed by the employees. For instance, Zhang and Wu (2004) state that the "current young generation sees hotel work as a getaway to a job in a ´higher status´ industry rather than as a life-time career commitment" (p.425).

Thirdly, many hospitality enterprises are also confronted by seasonality, which is defined as "cyclical variations in tourism demand" (Jolliffe & Farnsworth, 2003, p. 312). From the human resources point of view, managing seasonality requires innovative solutions. For example, Jolliffe and Farnsworth (2003) suggest that seasonality can either be challenged or embraced. The companies challenging seasonality attempt to extend their season by for instance offering extra services or taking advantage of pricing strategies during the low season. For these authors, with regard to human resources management, government subsidies could be sought to cover employee wages for a portion of the season. On the other hand, companies embracing seasonality may only operate during the high season and focus on hiring students or other temporary staff. Again, maintaining service quality with high proportion of temporary workers becomes a challenge.

In sum, Hospitality HRM is under pressure to engage qualified employees on a long term basis and thus the enterprises are required to make choices on three key challenges:

(1) coordination versus flexibility of HR behavior, (2) part-time versus fulltime HR policies and (3) challenging versus integrating seasonality into HRM planning.

Apart from the challenges, the hospitality industry possesses various other unique characteristics that highlight the importance of human resources management. In hospitality, the main product is services rather than tangible goods and the production and consumption of the hospitality product occur simultaneously with customers being an integral part of the process (Ford & Heaton, 2001; Ueno, 2008). It is thus evident that the quality of the product is highly dependent on the skills of the human capital. The knowledge, skills and attitudes of the employees are seen as intangible assets, difficult to imitate and thus offering a competitive advantage against competitors (Altinay & Altinay, 2006; Chand, 2010; Jolliffe & Farnsworth, 2003). In the literature, this is known as the "service profit chain". In the service profit chain, employee satisfaction is linked to customer satisfaction, resulting in customer loyalty and finally profits for the company (Browning et al., 2009; Crawford & Hubbard, 2008).

One of the key outcomes of employee satisfaction is the amount of effort they are willing to put into positive behaviors at work; this concerns both the customers (e.g. being willing to help) and the organization itself (e.g. giving constructive feedback to the management). With regards to this, four behavioral categories should be taken into consideration (Rusbult et al., 1988): voice (actively trying to improve conditions), loyalty (passively but optimistically waiting for conditions to improve), neglect (passively allowing conditions to deteriorate) and exit (leaving the organization).The link between satisfaction and behavioral options at work might not follow a direct path and job engagement has been found to operate as a mediator between some HR variables and exit behaviors, expressed as turnover intention (Ram & Prabhakar, 2011).

These behavioral options may be thought of as resulting from the interaction of two axes in a continuum: active versus passive crossed with constructive versus destructive effects. Voice and Loyalty fall both into the constructive (positive) pole while Exit and Neglect fall into the negative one. On the other hand, Voice and Exit are both active / pro-active behaviors while Loyalty and Neglect are both passive / reactive ones.

Little research exist regarding the characteristics of HRM in youth hostels, very little has been written about the characteristics of HRM in them (Nickson, 2007).

Considering their increasing popularity as the budget accommodation choice of many, however, it can be assumed that youth hostels are facing similar types of human resources challenges as described above. An emerging answer to these challenges might be seen in a recent study regarding the workforce in Scottish youth hostels (Papis, 2006), which found that the workforce in hostels is changing due to the industry's evolving nature. The modern "boutique" and "designer" hostels are seeking to employ highly skilled and qualified employees, not only students or other young and inexperienced persons looking for temporary work.

Hostels as a type of accommodation closely resemble other small and medium sized accommodation providers, and thus share similar organizational characteristics. For instance, the organizational structure is generally more limited, the culture more relaxed and the decision-making more centralized (Cetinel et al., 2009).The relaxed culture and flexible organizational structure makes the employee-customer relationship more personal. The centralized decision-making, on the other hand, can restrict employee performance as employee behavior is strongly dependent on the values and attitudes of the owner or manager. These characteristics also imply that in small business industries human resources practices vary considerably among organization, reflecting the uniqueness of the owner's ideology (Cetinel et al., 2009).

For example, in the study of Musa and Thirumoorthi (2009), customers described the most important employee qualities of the staff in the Red Palm hostel - a hostel voted the best Asian backpacker of 2006. Some specific employee attributes mentioned included the following: employees' personal attitude towards guests, their ability to make guests feel like home and the fact that the staff makes an effort to be both sociable and encourage socializing among guests. These attributes reflect the changing requirements of the hostel workforce that can be found in recent job advertisements regarding hostels. For instance, "active socializing with the guests" and "making sure guests are having a good time" are common requirements in hostel job listings around the world (Hostelsjobs.net).

2.3 Motivating work in hostels

Considering the specific characteristics and challenges of the hospitality industry, it is clear that effective HRM becomes an integral part of a firms' competitive advantage. In fact, the relationship between HRM practices and firm performance has been one of the key research areas in the HR literature in the past two decades: the results have shown statistically significant relationships between HR practices and firm profitability, among others (Boselie, Paauwe& Jansen, 2001; Guest, 1997; Huselid, 1995; Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2011). Most of the research on this topic has focused on financial performance and market value as indicators of firm performance; however, it is becoming increasingly important to understand the factors mediating the relationship between HRM and firm performance. Currently it is commonly accepted that HRM practices influence organizational performance through employee work related attitudes and behaviors such as employee motivation, which is now taken as a key mediator (Becker et al., 1997; Fey, Björkman & Pavlovskaya, 2000 & Gould-Williams & Mohamed, 2010).

In the hospitality industry, employee motivation and engagement should be at the center of attention with regards to HRM planning. As noted above, hospitality enterprises are required to make choices concerning: (1) coordination versus flexibility of HR behavior, (2) part-time versus full-time HR policies and (3) challenging versus integrating seasonality into HRM planning. Each of these challenges is highly dependent on employee motivation: firstly, flexible HR behavior and greater employee empowerment is only functional with a highly motivated workforce, who is willing to learn and employ creativity in a dynamic environment (Ogaard et al., 2008). Secondly, in order to motivate part-time and seasonal employees, innovative HRM policies and practices are required (Costa, 2007).

These factors explain the hospitality-specific research focused on HR best practices since the 1990s (Dubé et al., 1999; Enz & Siguaw, 2000). However, more research is needed and no consensus has been reached at a level that allows us to state what the specific best practices are (Hughes, 2002), and additionally their implementation to small and medium sized enterprises is questionable (Hwang & Lockwood, 2006). At best, one may propose better practices. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: no HRM practice can be regarded as best if it fails to motivate employees. As work motivation is

defined as an "individual's degree of willingness to exert and maintain an effort towards organizational goals" (Franco, Bennett & Kanfer, 2002, p. 1255) one can state that HR best practices research must take into consideration the motivation processes in work settings.

The current state of the art on motivation theories subsumed the vast array of theories that have been formulated since the 1930s to explain the many influential factors of human motivation (Locke & Latham, 2004) into a single integrated large model proposed by Locke in 1997 (see fig.1).
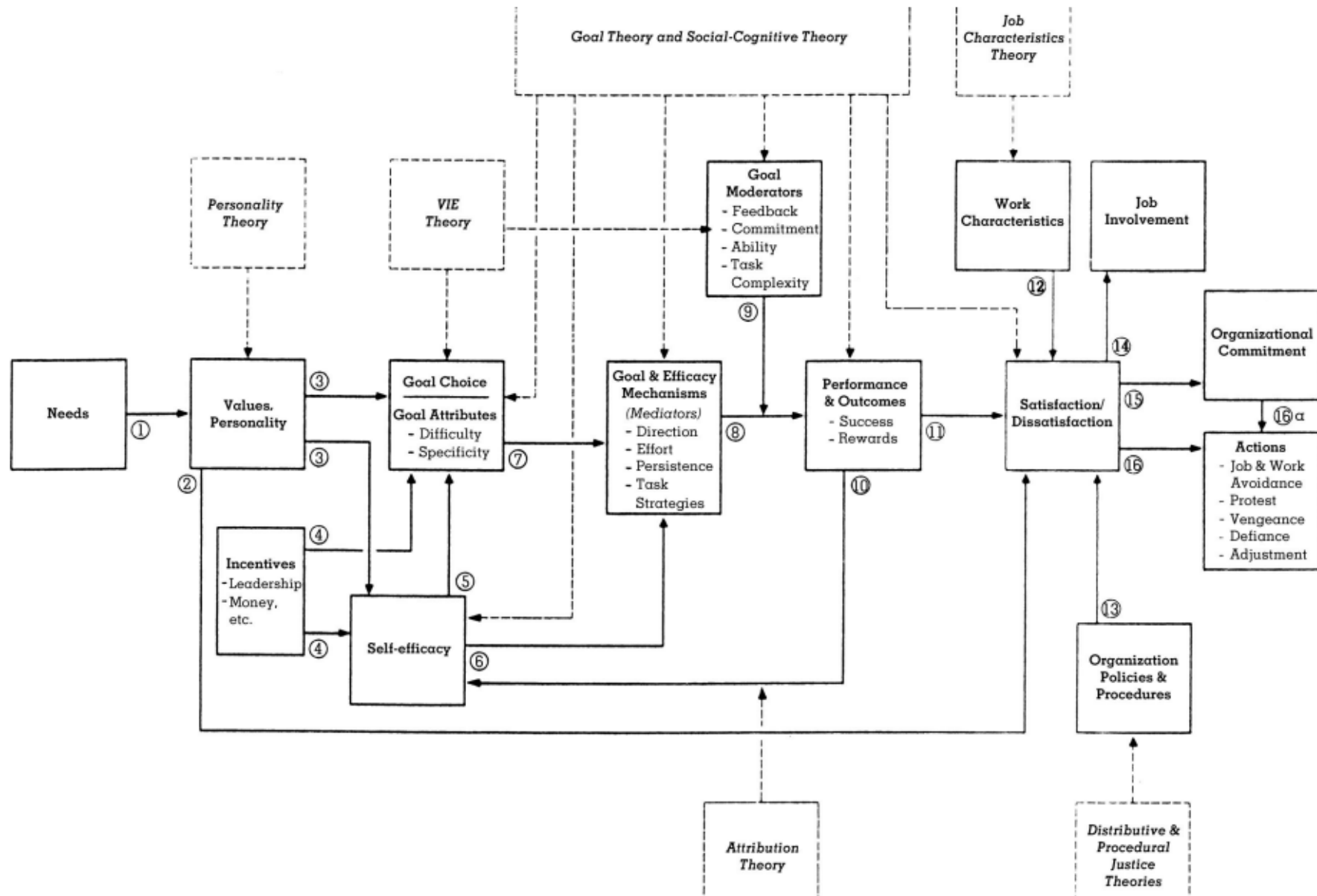
Figure 1 - An integrated model of work motivation (Locke & Latham, 2004).

11

Locke's model consists of 16 connections, which together describe the progression of employee motivation, including the numerous directions it can take. Each of the connections, apart from the first one (from needs to values), is supported by empirical research. The dotted boxes indicate the places where a particular motivational theory applies (Locke & Latham, 2004). A detailed explanation of each of the connections and relevant motivational theories follows.

Needs to values and personality: An individual's motivation is initiated by unsatisfied needs, which serve to guide behavior. The first connection in Locke's model states that these needs influence both work related values – conceptions of good and bad that hold a great deal of emotion – and motives. Personality is taken as a motive influencing behavior and attitudes towards the organization (Miner, 2005) and although the connection from needs to work values has not yet been fully studied it finds support in Maslow's proposal that people give value to something according to the extent that their needs are being satisfied (Locke & Latham, 2004).

The personality based theories emphasize individual differences in organizational behavior. For instance, McClelland's achievement motivation theory from the 1950s considers the need for achievement as a personal predisposition – or a subconscious motivation – that directs the pursuit of certain goals. Thus, individuals with a high need for achievement would be motivated by challenging tasks (Locke & Latham, 2004; Porter et al., 2003).

Values and personality to satisfaction plus Value and personality to goals and self-efficacy: Values and personality can influence job satisfaction either directly (through neuroticism and self-esteem), as indicated by the second connection, or alternatively through individual goal choice and self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the "individual's belief (confidence) about his or her capabilities to execute a specific task within a given context" (Porter et al., 2005, p. 48). Goals and self-efficacy are often considered two of the most direct and conscious motivational determinants of performance (Locke & Latham, 2004). Performance, then, drives satisfaction through success and rewards.

Incentives to goals and self-efficacy plus Self-efficacy to goals: Similarly to personality, incentives and reinforcements have a direct influence on self-efficacy and goal choice. The influence of incentives is particularly meaningful for individuals with a high belief

in their capacities; that is, individuals with high self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986, cited in Porter et al., 2005). Consequently, high self-efficacy directs individuals to set challenging goals.

Self-efficacy to mechanisms; Goals to mechanisms; Goal mechanisms to performance plus Goal moderators: Locke's model states that both self-efficacy and goal-choice affect performance through four main mediating mechanisms: direction, effort, persistence and task strategies. With regards to goals, this was also the basis of Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory in the 1960s. Goal-setting is expected to work because (1) goals direct individuals toward relevant behaviors, (2) goals require effort and thus function as an energizer and (3) goal attainment induces persistence. Additionally, (4) task strategies are directional mechanisms that require conscious problem solving and creative innovation, and are thus often applied on complex tasks (Miner, 2005). According to the goal-setting theory, specific challenging goals lead to higher performance than vague goals (Locke & Latham, 1990, cited by Seijts et al., 2004). Furthermore, the relationship between difficult goals and performance is enhanced by various goal moderators, such as feedback, commitment, ability and task complexity (Locke & Latham, 2004; Seijts et al., 2004).

The influence of these moderators is explained by, - the social-cognitive theory of work motivation – a theory that aims to explain how individuals interpret their social environment (Porter et al., 2003). It analyses, for instance, how individuals evaluate the feedback they receive in relation to their goals, or how committed they are to a particular goal (through self-efficacy, a central concept in this theory).

The belief that effort will lead to performance, and performance to particular outcomes is also the basis of the valence-instrumentality-expectancy theory (VIE) (Porter et al., 2003). According to the VIE theory, as proposed by Vroom in 1964, people make conscious choices (goal choice) about their work behavior in order to optimize personal outcomes. Thus, employee motivation is increased if the employee believes that greater effort leads to better performance (expectancy) and performance leads to positive outcomes (instrumentality) that match employee's preference (valence) (Lunenburg, 2011).

Performance to efficacy: Performance affects self-efficacy depending on the attributions one makes - that is, depending on the way individuals interpret their own and others'

behavior and attach value to events occurring around them (Locke & Latham, 2004; Porter et al., 2003).

Performance to satisfaction; Work characteristics to satisfaction, and Organizational policies and procedures to satisfaction: Locke acknowledges three further variables that have an impact on job satisfaction: (1) performance (through success and rewards), (2) the characteristics of the work (e.g. the level of mental challenge) and (3) organizational policies and procedures (e.g. the perceived fairness of policies). Motivational theories regarding work characteristics can be described as external motivational theories, since their focus is not on the internal attributes of the individual (Porter et al., 2003). The job characteristics theory originates in the work of Lawler and Hackman in the 1970s, but has evolved considerably since then. The original model by Lawler and Hackman identified four job attributes, essential for job enrichment and employee motivation:

1) *Autonomy*; feeling of personal responsibility for the job
2) *Task identity*; the outcome of completing a task from beginning to end
3) *Variety*; sufficient diversity requiring the use of different skills
4) *Feedback*; perception of feedback from the task itself or from co-workers and managers

Later, a fifth job attribute was added to the theory: *task significance*, which is defined as the degree to which the job has an impact on the lives of other people. All of these five characteristics are said to result into critical psychological states (e.g. experienced meaningfulness of the work and experienced responsibility for the outcomes) which then influence outcomes (effectiveness, motivation and satisfaction) (Miner, 2005; Porter et al., 2003).

The final motivational theories included in Locke's model are distributive and procedural justice theories. The basis of these two theories is that the decisions made in an organization have both economic and socio-emotional consequences for individuals; thus, the fairness of the decisions impacts motivation (Colquitt, 2001). Individuals evaluate the fairness of the decisions from two perspectives: distributive and procedural. Distributive justice refers to the fairness of the outcomes in relation to the individual effort expended (e.g. the equity theory by Stacy Adams in the 1960s). Procedural justice

theories, on the other hand, concern the fairness of the decision-making process employed in arriving at those outcomes (Greenberg, 1990; Miner, 2005; Porter et al., 2003).

The end part of the model takes job satisfaction, seen as the workers' attitudes towards the outcomes on the job, and proposes that satisfaction leads to various subsequent actions including job involvement and organizational commitment (Schneider 1985, cited by Sledge et al., 2008).

Currently, existing theories are taken as complementing rather than contradicting each other; and none of them alone is exhaustive in explaining motivation in the workplace. For this reason, Locke has proposed an integrative model of workplace motivation. Although the model has several limitations, such as excessive simplicity and restricted elaboration of the various theories, it is nevertheless effective in providing a general illustration of the various aspects of human motivation in the workplace. According to Locke and Latham (2004), further steps in the study of motivation would be to analyze the strength of the various connections, add further pathways based on additional theories and combine different integrative models.

2.3.1   Total rewards and quality of working life

One major area of motivation research is how incentives, rewards and reinforcements influence performance and behavior (Porter et al., 2003). In Locke's model (fig 1), the sources of employee satisfaction are to be found in success and rewards. Due to the complexity of human motivation it is also apparent that individuals differ in how they prefer to receive acknowledgement for their effort. Consequently, motivational practices have come to consist of much more than just pay and benefits; equal emphasis is now placed on for instance recognition, career opportunities and leadership as motivators (World at work, 2007).

The current approach to rewarding employees is best illustrated by the total rewards concept: "a framework for strategies to attract, motivate and retain employees" (World at work, 2007). The utility of the total reward approach for the employer can be summed up in five core benefits: (1) increased flexibility, (2) improved recruitment and retention, (3) reduced labor costs, (4) heightened visibility in a tight labor market and

(5) enhanced profitability. From the employees' point of view, total rewards can be defined as "…everything the employee perceives to be of value resulting from the employment relationship" (World at work, 2007, p.4).

The total rewards concept consists of five main elements:

- Compensation
- Benefits
- Work-life balance
- Performance & Recognition
- Development & Career Opportunities

The total rewards concept covers the intangible elements, which are important in that in many cases they override the economic elements in work motivation. In this sense, the quality of working life (QWL) becomes a key construct in the hostel HRM.

Quality of working life refers to the wellbeing of the employees and characterizes their broader job-related experience (Sirgy et al., 2001). High QWL has several positive consequences as shown by previous research. For instance, it is proposed that happy employees are often more productive, dedicated and loyal employees (Sirgy et al., 2001). It has also been indicated that QWL has an impact on employee behavioral responses such as exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (Rusbult et al, 1988) as well as with job involvement and personal alienation (Efraty & Sirgy, 1990, cited by Sirgy et al., 2001).

As previously described, employee behavior is a central concept in the hospitality industry as it strongly affects the customer perception of service quality. This is particularly true in the case of hostels due to their family-like climate while taking into consideration the current pressure to offer more formal/professional service (due to hostels becoming more upscale). In order to achieve high quality service while maintaining the casual environment, HR managers are required to put effort into the quality of working life and employee engagement in hostels. Although both are known to link with employee behavior at work, we believe that hostels' HRM features stress

the relational dimension of QWL, which may favor work engagement and thus promote positive behaviors. Thus, on the basis of this, the following model is proposed:
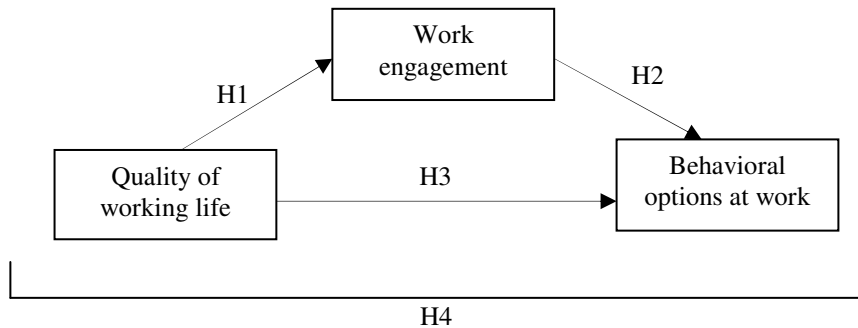
Figure 2 – Proposed mediation model

This model is built on the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: High quality of working life is positively associated with work engagement

Hypothesis 2a: High work engagement is positively associated with voice behavior at work

Hypothesis 2b: Low work engagement is positively associated with negative behaviors at work

Hypothesis 3a: High quality of working life is positively associated with voice behavior at work

Hypothesis 3b: Low quality of working life is positively associated with negative behaviors at work

Hypothesis 4: Work engagement mediates the relationship between quality of working life and behavioral options at work.

3. Methodology

The methodology employed in this study consists of two complementary phases, one qualitative and the other quantitative. The former one was designed to capture the reality of hostels and hostel HRM by interviewing managers and employees currently working in the sector. These interviews were then subjected to content analysis, and the insights thus gained were used as a basis for a survey to be completed by employees. The survey allowed us to carry out data analysis.

3.1 Qualitative data collection

Altogether we conducted eight in-depth interviews were conducted altogether – five with employees and three with managers. Each manager had either a full or shared ownership of the hostel, and they had been in their position since the early years of the Lisbon hostel industry. The employees also came from different hostels. Two were full-time employees working during the day, one was a part-time employee working during the night and the remaining two were completing an internship (in this case working in exchange for food and accommodation).

All the interviews were semi-structured, thus including a set of pre-determined questions but also allowing for more casual exploration of the topics. The main themes covered in the interviews with the managers included the managers' views regarding the international success of Lisbon hostels, current challenges facing the hostel industry and specific challenges with regards to HRM in hostels (for detailed questions asked, refer to appendix 1). In the employee interviews, the following issues were explored: quality of the relationship with the managers, colleagues and customers; feelings during an ordinary working day; physical health and quality of sleep; satisfaction with salary and benefits; intended duration of employment and reasons for changing jobs (appendix 1).

3.2 Quantitative data collection

Using the three constructs of the model (fig 2.) and their respective measures (QWL, Sirgy et al, 2001; Work engagement, UWES Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; and Behavioral

options at work, Rusbult et al, 1988), we adapted a survey in order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of employee perceptions on HRM in Lisbon hostels. A copy of the survey can be found in appendix 2. The questionnaires were delivered manually to all the hostels, not only to ensure a valid response rate, but also to obtain a sense of the current "climate" in the industry.

In the present study, QWL was conceptualized on the basis of Sirgy et al (2001) questionnaire that covers the following seven major needs that employees bring to the workplace: (1) health and safety, (2) economic and family needs, (3) social needs, (4) esteem needs, (5) actualization needs, (6) knowledge needs and (7) esthetic needs. Each of these major needs are further divided into several dimensions of needs. Work engagement, on the other hand, was assessed on the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), which is comprised of three aggregates: vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

Some minor modifications were made to the original questionnaire, both to improve clarity and conciseness and to better adapt it to the hostel environment. Firstly, the measurement scale was standardized for all sections: a Likert type scale from 1 (totally agree) to 6 (totally disagree) was used. Secondly, in regard to the construct "behavioral options at work", eight items were omitted as they were not considered relevant in hostels. Hence, only three items were used to measure each of the behavioral responses (exit, voice, loyalty and neglect). Finally, the sentence phrasing was modified; for, instance, "I have talked to people to try to change working conditions here" instead of "I have at least once contacted an outside agency (e.g. union) to get help in changing working conditions in here". After the necessary modifications, the questionnaire was translated into Portuguese, and both the English and the Portuguese version was available to the employees.

3.3 Study sample

As noted above, Lisbon is well-known for its high quality, contemporary style hostels. Lisbon's continuous success in the ranking of the best hostels worldwide ("Hoscar Awards", being held yearly in Dublin) has been pointed out in various Portuguese tourism related magazines and websites (e.g. *Hostels Portugueses voltam a brilhar e conquistam premios de excelencia",* Fugas, 27 February, 2012; *"Portugal tem os melhores hostels do mundo",* Alma de Viajante, 9 February, 2012). The city's success

in the Hoscar Awards has been explained with reference to, for instance, the Portuguese passion for hosting (Tiago Venancio, a co-owner of Traveller's House, in an interview to Web Reservations International, 2011) and by the careful decoration of the hostels (Ricardo Castro, one of the associate members of the Poets Hostel chain, "*Lisboa tem os melhores hostels do mundo",* Jornalionline, 30 de Agosto de 2009).

This year (2013) Lisbon received the top four places in the "Best Worldwide Hostels"-category in the following order: Yes! Lisbon Hostel, Home Hostel, Traveller's House and Living Lounge. There are seven main categories in the Hoscar Awards: worldwide winners, country winners, rating criteria winners, tour winners, continent winners, most popular hostels and all other winners (comprised of special categories such as "most improved hostel" and best hostel for groups"). The success is based on the reviews that customers leave after staying in a hostel, rating them on character, location, staff, security, cleanliness and fun (Hostelworld.com).

For the above reasons, Lisbon hostels were regarded as an excellent study sample for the purpose of the present paper. The hostels chosen for the study included all the Lisbon hostels in partnership with Hostelworld.com (48 hostels, of which 40 took part in the study).

4. Results

Data analysis was conducted with a two-step strategy. Firstly, we performed a content analysis on the data collected from the interviews in order to gain insight into the specific context and the key variables at play and to judge the need to adjust the original measures. Once in possession of the data collected with the survey, the second step consisted of testing psychometric quality, followed by the hypothesis testing. For the psychometric testing, we used factor analysis with validity indicators (KMO, MSAs, Bartlett test, and commonalities above .500). Additionally, reliability testing was performed via Cronbach's alpha (which should reach at least .70). The hypotheses were tested with regression analysis.

4.1 Summary of interviews

4.1.1. Summary of interviews with managers

From the interviews with managers it became evident that certain aspects of the Lisbon hostel industry have changed considerably since its commencement eight years ago. Initially, the success of a hostel was largely based on the owners' freedom to be creative and ability to provide excellent service in a family-like, fun and relaxed environment. These aspects reflect the general welcoming nature of the Portuguese people, which still undoubtedly accounts for the international success of Lisbon's hostels. However, lately much of this freedom has been restricted by the increased competition and government-imposed regulations. Unlike at the beginning, now there is less room for mistakes and even a few negative customer reviews can critically damage the hostel's popularity. Besides Portuguese hospitality, Lisbon hostels' success was explained with reference to their modern and clean interiors as well as their small size, making them more efficient and adding to their family-like environment.

In the current economic situation, it is understandable that the hostel industry comes forth as an appealing opportunity for many aspiring entrepreneurs – the rents in Lisbon are fairly low and the city is a popular tourism destination. However, as stated, the business is not easy and the competition is fierce. For instance, one of the managers pointed out that the average price of a hostel bed has gone down from €18 to €12 in only three years. Thus, it is not difficult to deduce the current challenges the industry is facing – such as how to maintain the genuine and family-like environment while being

pressured by increasing taxation and other regulations - how to keep making profit while dealing with low occupancy rates during the winter. In addition, changing industry trends and increasing customer demands add to the complexity of hostel management. For instance, lately it has become popular to look for authentic and local experiences when traveling to a foreign country, and thus many travelers choose to stay at a short-term holiday rental or with a local host (e.g. couchsurfing) instead of a hotel or a hostel (Couchsurfing International, 2013).

These changing industry trends and conditions inevitably create challenges and call for innovative ways for managing human resources in a hostel. According to the interviews, it seems that the desired personal skills and qualities of a hostel employee are mostly the same as those of hospitality employees in general: individuals with excellent people and language skills, passion for travel and knowledge of the city are sought after. Of these qualities, particularly people skills and sociability are highly appreciated. This, however, imposes another kind of challenge in the current environment: according to one of the managers, it is sometimes difficult to find individuals with the right balance of sociability and responsibility. As previously described, hostel employees are often expected to engage in socializing with the guests and encourage socializing among guests, but obviously without forgetting their other duties and without diminishing their general efficiency at work.

The evolving nature of the hostel industry clearly influences the workforce: nowadays hostels receive job applications from individuals with varying educational backgrounds, and also increasingly from people who have formal training and experience in the hospitality industry. The managers' views on the ideal job candidate varied widely. On one hand, it was seen advantageous to hire people from the hospitality industry as they are truly customer focused, used to the erratic working hours and likely to stay longer at the job. On the other hand, though, it was pointed out that the nature of work in a hostel differs from that of other hospitality organizations (e.g. hotels) to an extent that the same working methods – such as the level of formality in customer service or being trained for a specific job role – may not apply. These diverging views can be partly explained by the fact that hostels are also already being segmented according to their character; hence, there is no one description of an ideal employee.

4.1.2. Summary of interviews with employees

Employees, too, emphasized the sociability aspect of the work, which they highly appreciated – for obvious reasons. Working in a hostel, one is able to connect and forge friendships with people from all around the world. Due to the relaxed and friendly environment of a hostel, one can truly realize one's passion for the industry. In a hostel, the relationship with the guests is genuine and often quite personal, and thus many employees feel rewarded by the opportunity to help and guide people who are new to the city. Despite these apparently positive sides of the work, many employees nevertheless regard hostel work as the second best option – thus, common reasons for changing a job include career growth opportunities and better pay.

The way the employees viewed the demands of their work depended to some extent on the type of contract they had. For instance, the employees completing an internship considered it challenging to separate work and leisure time as they felt they were always "on-call". For these employees, the work was more mentally than physically tiring. By contrast, for the employee working a night shift, physical tiredness was the most strenuous aspect of the work. The employees working a day shift considered the occasional tricky situations with guests as the most challenging sides of the work. Another interesting aspect pointed out during the interviews was, for instance, the fact that hostels' employees perform various job roles simultaneously (e.g. being a receptionist, tour guide, friend and janitor). This aspect was, however, regarded in the main as a positive rather than a negative one.

4.2 Survey results

This section begins with testing the psychometric quality of the measures and then moves on to hypothesis testing. Psychometric quality testing requires all measures to be both valid and reliable, meaning that the instruments have measure the intended construct (usually tested via factor analysis) and all items within the same factor should be internally consistent (i.e. reliable, which is tested via Cronbach's alpha).

4.2.1   Testing psychometric quality

Considering the variable "Quality of working life", and following the technical procedures mentioned at the beginning of this section, we found a three-factor solution (KMO=.824, Bartlett test $\chi 2$ = 465.086, 45d.f., p<.000; .736<MSA<.883): (1)"Development" with four items aggregating the original "knowledge" and "actualization" need dimensions (alpha=.838), (2) "Hedonic" with four items (alpha=.774), each from different QWL need dimensions (social; health and safety; esteem; economic and family needs), and (3) "Creativity" with two items (r =.835) cumulatively explaining 72.2% of variance after a varimax rotation. The rotated matrix is as follows:

Table 1 – *Rotated matrix for QWL*

	Component		
	1	2	3
Know_This job allows me to sharpen my professional skills	,809	,108	,184
Act_I feel that I am realizing my potential as an expert in my line of work	,796	,388	,065
Know_I feel that I am always learning new things that help do my job better	,776	,066	,301
Act_I feel that my job allows me to realize my full potential	,698	,473	,148
Soc_I have enough time away from work to enjoy other things in life	,118	,839	-,011
Est_I feel appreciated at work at this hostel	,222	,782	,374
EF_I am satisfied with what I'm getting paid for my work	,304	,700	,190
HS_I feel physically safe at work	,117	,648	,120
Creat_My job helps me to develop my creativity outside of work	,121	,266	,882
Creat_There is a lot of creativity involved in my job	,373	,099	,842

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

With regard to the variable "Behavioral options at work", we found a two-factor solution (KMO=.685, Bartlett test $\chi 2$ = 167.361, 21d.f., p<.000; .441<MSA<.771) with the following factors: (1) "Negative behaviors" with five items aggregating the original "Exit" and "Neglect" need dimensions (alpha = .773) and (2) "Voice" with two items (r =.758) cumulatively explaining 60.9% of variance after a varimax rotation. The rotated matrix is as follows:

Table 2 – *Rotated matrix for behavioral options at work*

	Component	
	1	2
E3_I have recently spent some time looking for another job	,776	-,072
E1_I often think about quitting	,770	-,197
E2_During the next year I will probably look for a new job outside this hostel	,716	-,231
N3_Now and then I arrive at work late because I really am not in the mood for work that day	,689	,016
N2_Now and then there are workdays where I don't put much effort into my work	,676	,149
V4_I sometimes exchange ideas about problems at work with my employer	,084	,883
V2_When I think of an idea that will benefit my hostel I make a determined effort to implement it	-,208	,821

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Finally, a three factor solution was found for the variable "Work engagement" (KMO=.834, Bartlett test χ2 = 332,056, 28d.f., p<.000; .725<MSA<.899): (1) "Vigor" with three items (alpha = .791), (2) "Absorption" with three items (alpha = .757), and (3) "Dedication" with two items (r =.728) cumulatively explaining 75.1% of variance after a varimax rotation. The rotated matrix is as follows:

Table 3 – *Rotated matrix for work engagement*

	Component		
	1	2	3
V3_When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	,795	,072	,272
V2_At my work, I feel strong and vigorous	,791	,444	,024
V1_At my work I feel bursting with energy	,759	,274	,196
A2_When I am working, I forget everything else around me	,124	,886	,136
A1_Time flies when I'm working	,455	,744	-,019
A5_I get carried away when I'm working	,205	,637	,317
D4_I am proud on the work that I do	,149	,122	,930
D3_My job inspires me	,560	,277	,601

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

4.2.2 Descriptives

Table 4 – *Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix*

	N	Mean	s.d.	range	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
QWL_Develop	98	4,13	1,09	1- 6	(.84)							
QWL_hedonic	93	4,34	1,15	1- 6	,556**	(.77)						
QWL_creativity	98	4,10	1,26	1- 6	,513**	,432**	(.61)					
BOW_negative_B	97	2,28	1,09	1- 5	-,355**	-,399**	-,285**	(.77)				
BOW_voice	97	4,66	1,02	1-6	,088	,306**	,308**	-,112	(.76)			
WE_Vigor	98	4,20	1,03	1,7-6	,612**	,559**	,510**	-,418**	,242*	(.79)		
WE_Absorption	97	4,07	1,02	1,7-6	,418**	,394**	,396**	-,435**	,258*	,597**	(.76)	
WE_Dedication	97	4,43	1,01	1,7-6	,568**	,316**	,565**	-,388**	,333**	,589**	,469**	(.73)

*p<.01; ** p<.05; reliability indicators at the diagonal

4.2.3 Hypothesis testing

In order to test hypothesis 1: "high quality of working life is positively associated with work engagement", we have conducted three multiple linear regression analyses using the three dimensions of work engagement separately as three dependent variables.

Vigor

After checking for multicollinearity (VIF=1.404) we found a significant model explaining 47% (adjusted) of variance with a significant QWL-Development (β=.342, t(2)= 3,508, p<.01), QWL-Hedonic (β=.261, t(2)= 2,799, p<.01) and QWL-Creativity (β=.248, t(2)= 2,755, p<.01).

Table 5 – *QWL predictors of work engagement (vigor)*
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	1,756	,341		5,152	,000		
	QWL_Develop	,589	,080	,613	7,393	,000	1,000	1,000
2	(Constant)	1,209	,362		3,338	,001		
	QWL_Develop	,420	,091	,437	4,621	,000	,691	1,448
	QWL_hedonic	,287	,086	,316	3,338	,001	,691	1,448
3	(Constant)	,964	,361		2,670	,009		
	QWL_Develop	,329	,094	,342	3,508	,001	,605	1,654
	QWL_hedonic	,237	,085	,261	2,799	,006	,660	1,515
	QWL_creativity	,204	,074	,248	2,755	,007	,712	1,404

a. Dependent Variable: WE_Vigor

Absorption

A significant model explaining 20% (adjusted) of variance was found (multicollinearity VIF = 1.337) with the following two factors: QWL-Development (β=.275, t(2)= 2,541, p<.05), and QWL- Creativity (β=.263, t(2)= 2,426, p<.05).

Table 6 – *QWL predictors of work engagement (absorption)*
Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2,442	,397		6,152	,000		
	QWL_Develop	,392	,093	,408	4,233	,000	1,000	1,000
2	(Constant)	2,075	,415		4,997	,000		
	QWL_Develop	,265	,104	,275	2,541	,013	,748	1,337
	QWL_creativity	,217	,090	,263	2,426	,017	,748	1,337

a. Dependent Variable: WE_Absorption

Dedication

After checking for multicollinearity (VIF=1.338) we found a significant model explaining 40.8% (adjusted) of variance with a significant QWL-Development (β=.365, t(2)= 3,914, p<.001), and QWL- Creativity (β=.383, t(2)= 4,102, p<.001).

Table 7 – *QWL predictors of work engagement (dedication)*
Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	2,528	,302		8,382	,000		
QWL_creativity	,459	,070	,566	6,520	,000	1,000	1,000
2 (Constant)	1,710	,350		4,893	,000		
QWL_creativity	,310	,076	,383	4,102	,000	,747	1,338
QWL_Develop	,345	,088	,365	3,914	,000	,747	1,338

a. Dependent Variable: WE_Dedication

In order to test the second hypothesis 2a ("high work engagement is positively associated with voice behavior at work) we have conducted one multiple linear regression analysis using the three dimensions of work engagement as three possible predictors.

Only work engagement (dedication) significantly predicted voice behavior with an adjusted explained variance of 10.5% (β=.338, t(2)= 3,465, p<.01).

Table 8 – *Work engagement predictors of voice behavior*
Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	3,147	,447		7,036	,000		
WE_Dedication	,340	,098	,338	3,465	,001	1,000	1,000

a. DependentVariable: BOW_voice

In regard to hypothesis 2b: "low work engagement is positively associated with negative behaviors at work" (and after checking for multicollinearity, VIF = 1.258) we found a significant model explaining 21.6% (adjusted) of variance with a significant WE-absorption (β= -.325, t(2)=-3,173, p<.01), and WE-Dedication (β= -.239, t(2)=-2,336, p<.05).Findings partially support Hypothesis 2b.

Table 9 – *Work engagement predictors of negative behaviors at work*
Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	4,146	,419		9,903	,000		
WE_Absorption	-,463	,100	-,433	-4,635	,000	1,000	1,000
2 (Constant)	4,810	,498		9,656	,000		
WE_Absorption	-,347	,110	-,325	-3,173	,002	,795	1,258
WE_Dedication	-,257	,110	-,239	-2,336	,022	,795	1,258

a. Dependent Variable: BOW_negative_B

In order to test the hypothesis 3a ("high quality of working life is positively associated with voice behavior at work) we have conducted one multiple linear regression analysis using the three dimensions of quality of working life as three possible predictors. For voice behavior at work we found a significant model explaining 10.2% (adjusted) of variance with a significant QWL_creativity (β=.334, t(2)=3,362, p<.01) predictor. Findings partially support Hypothesis 3a.

Table 10 – *QWL predictors of voice behavior*
Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	3,649	,327		11,148	,000		
QWL_creativity	,256	,076	,334	3,362	,001	1,000	1,000

a. DependentVariable: BOW_voice

With regard to hypothesis 3b: "low quality of working life is positively associated with negative behaviors at work, a significant model explaining 15% (adjusted) of variance

was found with only QWL_hedonic (β=-.399, t(2)= -4.124, p<.01) as a predictor. Findings partially support Hypothesis 3b.

Table 11 –*QWL predictors of negative behaviors at work*
Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	3,906	,412		9,469	,000		
QWL_hedonic	-,379	,092	-,399	-4,124	,000	1,000	1,000

a. Dependent Variable: BOW_negative_B

In order to test hypothesis 4 ("work engagement mediates the relationship between quality of working life and behavioral options at work"), we applied the criteria stated by Barron and Kenny (1986) for mediation analysis; namely that (a) the predictor is significantly associated with the mediator, (b) mediator is significantly associated with the dependent variable) and (c) predictor is significantly associated with the dependent variable. The case is the path comprehending QWL_creativity-Work engagement Dedication-Voice. Conducting the regression analysis with the predictor and the mediator entered simultaneously made the relation between QWL_Creativity and Voice non-significant (β=.180, t(1)= 1.541, p=.127). This means results indicate the existence of a total mediation between QWL_Creativity, WE_Dedication, and Voice.

Table 12 – *QWL + work engagement predictors of voice behavior at work*

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	3,031	,453		6,687	,000		
WE_Dedication	,233	,118	,231	1,981	,051	,683	1,465
QWL_creativity	,146	,095	,180	1,541	,127	,683	1,465

a. DependentVariable: BOW_voice

5. Discussion and conclusions

This study explores how the quality of working life impacts employee behavior in hostels, mediated by employee engagement. The study was conducted in Lisbon, and it encompasses 98 employees from 40 hostels. Our results revealed only one significant model explaining the pathways among these three constructs, which is as follows: the feeling of dedication totally mediates the relationship between QWL (creativity) and proactive behavior at work (voice). In other words, employees will not engage in "…constructive, change-oriented communication"(Le Pine & Van Dyne, 2001:326) without being "…strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge" (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). These findings partly support hypothesis 4 ("work engagement mediates the relationship between quality of working life and behavioral options at work"). However, it should be noted that various other statistically significant relationships were also found, which partially support the different hypotheses.

One of the main insights to be gained from our model is the importance of employee voice – their opinions and ideas are often priceless for the management in the current competitive business environment (Hsiung, 2012). As described in the preceding sections, the Lisbon hostel scene in particular has reached a point of saturation where new innovations and constant improvement are an integral part of hostel management's efforts to differentiate a hostel from its competitors. Thus, one of the key objectives of hostel HRM should be to provide a working environment where the employees' voice is heard and their opinions are considered a means of facilitating change and innovation (Crant & Wang, 2010). According to our findings, a feeling of dedication was one of the requirements for employee voice in hostels (supported hypothesis 2a: "high work engagement is positively associated with voice behavior at work").

A natural follow-up question, of course, is how to create a working environment that promotes employee dedication? In our study, creativity and development were the two QWL dimensions that had a significant relationship with work engagement (hypothesis 1: "high quality of working life is significantly associated with work engagement"). Firstly, most of the past research on the nature of the industry has focused on the less desirable aspects of hospitality work (e.g. low pay, erratic working hours and emotional labor, as discussed in the literature review section) (Bharwani & Butt, 2012). However,

those studies that have taken a more positive approach (e.g. Mkono, 2010) have found that creativity is often one of the most rewarding aspects of hospitality work. Considering the working environment in hostels (family-like atmosphere where the employees are required to balance between different job roles and to make effective decisions on their own), a certain amount of creativity is needed.

With regard to QWL development, it had a significant correlation with all the three aggregates of work engagement (vigor, absorption and dedication). This is suggestive of the career stage that the hostel employees envision themselves in. A frequently expressed view in the interviews was that a hostel job is not a job for life. In this early and temporary career stage, development is, in itself, a reward. Finally, even though the third QWL dimension, "hedonic", failed to explain work engagement, it was the only factor that had a significant relationship with "negative behaviors at work" (hypothesis 3b: "low quality of working life is positively associated with negative behaviors at work"). The hedonic factor consists of various need dimensions: social, health and safety, esteem, and economic and family – all somehow related to the basic needs to be fulfilled in a relationship within professional context. Thus, returning to the less desirable aspects of the hospitality industry, this finding can be thought of as certain kind of avoidance of these challenges.

Another issue that deserves consideration concerns the low variance the model explains (11.4%). It is not uncommon to have models explaining low variance published in management but this indicates potential for finding competitive models with variables that help adding explained variance.

Some further limitations of the present study should also be noted. One obvious limitation is sample size. The simple fact that the hostels form a niche market advises against conducting surveys that would eventually require some sort of statistical analysis. However, as the study focuses on employees (about 200 altogether in Lisbon) the feasibility of a quantitative approach is not compromised *ab initio*. This only made central the need to motivate their participation in the study which we believe was sufficiently achieved (50% response rate).

Some directions for future research would include the influence of personality on employee engagement and voice behavior in hostels. This was a common issue present in the interviews – how to find people who have the right amount of sociability without

neglecting responsibility. Previous research has also connected different personality types to voice behavior at work; for instance, Nikolau, Vakola and Bourantas (2006) found that conscientiousness is one of the most significant personality traits leading to voice behavior at work. This connection is explained by the fact that conscientious individuals are often more dedicated to achieving goals, and look for greater personal control in their job. Another area of future research would be to examine the different types of management styles and their influence on employee behavior, particularly in the context of hostel management, where the scale of management styles is varied (from family-owned businesses to more formal style management in larger hostels or chains). For instance, in the study of Hsiung (2012), an authentic leadership style was found to encourage employee's voice behavior.

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7. Appendix

Appendix 1: Interviews

<u>Interview questions for employers:</u>

1) How is the hostel industry faring? Why is it so good in Lisbon?
2) What are the most important challenges for the hostel industry?
3) Please name three HR challenges facing now the hostel industry.
4) What motivates employees to work here? Why do they stay? Why do they leave?

   4a) for how long do they tend to stay on average?
5) How do you deal with seasonality? What HRM practices are linked to this issue? How does it impact your HRM?
6) What is a typical client in your hostel?
7) Axis 1: In a continuum line between full control (full planning) and no control (full flexibility), where do you position this hostel's management now? (1-100). Why?
8) Axis 2: In a continuum line between employee short-term commitment versus long-term commitment, where do you position this hostel's management now? (1-100).What has been happening in regard to employee tenure?
9) Axis 3: In a continuum line between accepting seasonality versus challenging seasonality, where do you position this hostel's management now? (0-100).

<u>Interviews questions for employees:</u>

1) How would you rate your working experience here in terms of:
- Quality of relationship with peers/colleagues
- Quality of relationship with clients
- Quality of relationship with managers/owners

   (on a scale from 1, very bad, to 5, very good).
2) How do you feel on your common working days? Name five feelings.
3) How is your health (physical)

4) How would you rate your work life with regards to protecting versus harming your health (on a scale from 1 to 5)

5) What is the quality of your sleep? Have you had any unbalance in your life that has impacted your health?

6) Are you happy with your wage? Does it suffice to your goals?

7) For how long are you planning to stay here?

8) What are your criteria for changing a job?

9) Do you have a variable pay? On which basis is it decided?

10) What are the benefits that you get out of this job here? (e.g. health insurance, transportation benefits etc).

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Human Resources Management in Lisbon hostels: employee perceptions

I am a master's student at ISCTE-IUL and this questionnaire is part of my master's thesis regarding Human Resources Management in hostels. The hostel quality in Lisbon is internationally recognized and thus provides an excellent study sample. By taking 10 minutes to answer this short questionnaire, you are helping to increase knowledge on the hostel industry, which may offer innovative ways of thinking hospitality management. Your responses will be strictly confidential and all the results are reported anonymously. I highly appreciate your cooperation! Thank you. If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire, you may contact me on: tiialehti@hotmail.com

Section 1: Quality of work life

Please read the following sentences and cross the one that best describes you.

Totally	Disagree	Slightly	Slightly	Agree	Totally
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

		Totally disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Totally agree
1.	I feel physically safe at work	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
2.	My job provides good health benefits	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
3.	I do my best to stay healthy and fit	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
4.	I am satisfied with what I'm getting paid for my work	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
5.	I feel that my job at this hostel is secure for life	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
6.	My job does well for my family	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
7.	I have good friends at work	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
8.	I have enough time away from work to enjoy other things in life	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

9.	I feel appreciated at work at this hostel	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
10.	People at this hostel and/or within my profession respect me as a professional and an expert in my field of work	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
11.	I feel that my job allows me to realize my full potential	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
12.	I feel that I am realizing my potential as an expert in my line of work	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
13.	I feel that I am always learning new things that help do my job better	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
14.	This job allows me to sharpen my professional skills	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
15.	There is a lot of creativity involved in my job	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
16.	My job helps me to develop my creativity outside of work	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

Section 2: Work and wellbeing

#	Statement	Totally disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Totally agree
	At my work I feel bursting with energy	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
2.	I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
3.	Time flies when I'm working	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
4.	At my work, I feel strong and vigorous	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
5.	I am enthusiastic about my job	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
6.	When I am working, I forget everything else around me	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
7.	My job inspires me	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
8.	When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
9.	I feel happy when I am working intensely	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
10.	I am proud on the work that I do	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
11.	I am immersed in my work	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
12.	I can continue working very long periods at a time	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
13.	To me, my job is challenging	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
14.	I get carried away when I'm working	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
15.	At my job, I am very resilient, mentally	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
16.	It is difficult to detach myself from my job	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
17.	At my work, I always persevere, even when things do not go well	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
	Facing a problem, I feel it is better to wait. Things will get solved one way or another	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
	The people in charge of this hostel generally know what they are doing	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
20.	I often think about quitting	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
21.	When I think of an idea that will benefit my hostel I make a determined effort to implement it	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
22.	I have talked to people to try to change working conditions here	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
23.	I sometimes exchange ideas about problems at work with my employer	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
24.	Sometimes when I just don't feel like working I will call in sick	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

25.	I've found that patience is a virtue at this hostel – time solves most problems at work	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
26.	During the next year I will probably look for a new job outside this hostel	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
27.	Now and then there are workdays where I don't put much effort into my work	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
28.	I have recently spent some time looking for another job	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
29.	Now and then I arrive at work late because I really am not in the mood for work that day	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

Gender	☐ Female ☐ Male	**Nationality**	☐ Portuguese ☐ Other: _____
Age	_____ years-old	**Shifts**	☐ Day ☐ Night ☐ Both
Tenure	_____ years	**Hours of work**	_____ h (per week)
Highest level of education	☐ Grammar school ☐ Bachelor's degree 9 years-school ☐ High school ☐ Master's or above (12 years)	**Type of contract**	☐ Full-time ☐ Part-time ☐ Internship

THANK YOU!

Gestão de Recursos Humanos nos Hosteis de Lisboa: Perceções dos empregados

Sou uma estudante de mestrado na ISCTE-Business School e este inquérito pretende contribuir para a minha tese de mestrado sobre a Gestão de Recursos Humanos nos Hosteis. A qualidade dos hosteis em Lisboa é internacionalmente reconhecida e constitui um excelente caso de estudo. Este questionário breve demora apenas 10 minutos a responder e é um contributo importante para ajudar a conhecer este sector que pode oferecer novas formas de pensar a gestão no turismo. As suas respostas são estritamente confidenciais e todos os resultados serão reportados de forma anónima. Muito obrigada pela sua cooperação! Se tiver alguma dúvida por favor contacte-me em tiialehti@hotmail.com

Secção 1: Qualidade de vida no trabalho

Por favor leia as próximas frases e escolha a opção que melhor o/a descreve

	Discordo	Discordo	Discordoligeiram	Concordolig	Concordo	Concordotot
	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

		Discordototalmente	Discordo	Discordoligeiramente	Concordoligeiramente	Concordo	Concordototalmente
	Sinto-me fisicamente seguro no trabalho	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
2.	O meu emprego tem vantagens ligadas à proteção na saúde (ex. seguros)	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
3.	Faço o meu melhor para me manter saudável e em forma	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
4.	Estou satisfeito/a com o salário que recebo	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
5.	Sinto que o meu emprego aqui neste hostel é um emprego para o resto da minha vida	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
6.	O meu trabalho é benéfico para a minha família	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
7.	Tenho bons amigos no trabalho	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
8.	Passo tempo suficiente longe do trabalho para poder apreciar outras coisas na vida	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

9.	Sinto-me reconhecido no trabalho aqui neste hostel	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
10.	As pessoas neste hostel ou nesta ocupação respeitam-me como um bom/boa profissional	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
11.	Sinto que o meu trabalho permite-me realizar totalmente o meu potencial	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
12.	Sinto que estou a realizar o meu potencial neste tipo de trabalho	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
13.	Sinto que estou sempre a aprender coisas novas que me ajudam melhorar o meu trabalho	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
14.	Este trabalho ajuda-me a desenvolver as minhas competências profissionais	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
15.	O meu trabalho implica uma grande quantidade de criatividade	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
16.	O meu trabalho ajuda-me a desenvolver a minha criatividade fora do meu local de trabalho	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

Secção 2: Trabalho e bem-estar

		Discordo totalmente	Discordo	Discordo ligeiramente	Concordo ligeiramente	Concordo	Concordo totalmente
	No meu trabalho sinto-me cheio de energia	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
2.	Penso que o meu trabalho tem muito significado e propósito	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
3.	O tempo voa quando estou a trabalhar	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
4.	No meu trabalho sinto-me forte e com vigor	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
5.	Entusiasmo-me no meu trabalho	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
6.	Quando estou a trabalhar esqueço-me de tudo o resto à minha volta	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
7.	O meu trabalho inspira-me	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
8.	Quando acordo de manhã tenho vontade de ir trabalhar	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
9.	Sinto-me feliz quando estou a trabalhar intensamente	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
10.	Tenho orgulho no trabalho que faço	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
11.	Estou imerso no meu trabalho	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
12.	Consigo trabalhar durante longos períodos de tempo	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
13.	Para mim, o meu trabalho é desafiante	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
14.	Eu deixo-me levar sem noção de tempo quando estou a trabalhar	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
15.	No meu trabalho, eu sou mentalmente muito resiliente	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
16.	É difícil afastar-me do meu trabalho	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
17.	No meu trabalho tendo sempre a perseverar mesmo quando as coisas não estão a correr bem	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
	Face a um problema, sinto que é melhor esperar. As coisas resolvem-se por si.	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
	As pessoas à frente deste hostel geralmente sabem o que estão a fazer	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
20.	Penso frequentemente em despedir-me	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
21.	Quando tenho uma ideia que pode beneficiar o meu hostel esforço-me por a implementar	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥
22.	Já falei com pessoas para ajudar a mudar as condições de trabalho aqui	①	②	③	④	⑤	⑥

23.	Eu falo de problemas que ocorrem no trabalho com o meu empregador	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
24.	Por vezes quando não me apetece trabalhar meto uma baixa e digo que estou doente	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
25.	Descobri que a paciência é uma virtude neste hostel, o tempo resolve a maioria dos problemas no trabalho	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
26.	Durante o próximo ano deverei procurar um novo emprego for a deste hostel	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
27.	Por vezes quando não me apetece trabalhar, não me esforço muito	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
28.	Gastei recentemente algum tempo à procura de um outro emprego	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
29.	Ocasionalmente chegou atrasado/a ao emprego porque realmente não me apetece ir trabalhar nesse dia	① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥

Sexo	□Feminino □Masculino	**Nacionalidade**	□ Portuguesa □Otra: _____
Idade	_____ anos	**Turnos**	□Dia□Noite□ Ambos
Antiguidade	_____ anos	**Horas de trabalho**	_____ h (porsemana)
Highest level of education	□ até 9º ano □Licenciatura □ até 12º ano □Mestradooumais	**Type of contract**	□ Full-time □ Part-time □Estágio

OBRIGADA!