

Lourdes Susaeta Erburu / Clara Martín-Duque /
Yolanda Romero-Padilla / Esperanza Suárez Ruz

Organizational Commitment and Well-Being HR Practices: A Gender Bias Perspective for the Hospitality Industry in Spain

Abstract

This study examines hospitality employees' perceptions of Human Resources (HR) policies and practices and their impact on organizational commitment before and during a crisis. Specifically, it explores the influence of gender bias on organizational commitment. Focusing on the role of HR practices in fostering commitment, the study analyses changes in commitment during the pre- and post-crisis periods. An online survey was conducted among employees in the hotel industry in Spain, resulting in 467 complete responses. Factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis validated the measurement model. The findings support the hypothesis that organizations with pre-existing HR practices promoting employee well-being experienced higher levels of organizational commitment during the crisis.

Additionally, organizations implementing policies to address gender bias achieved higher levels of organizational commitment. The study presents a typology, categorizing HR practices as crisis-appropriate or non-crisis-appropriate and commitment or non-commitment practices. This study provides insights into understanding and measuring organizational commitment through HR practices and emphasizes the significance of addressing gender bias in fostering commitment. Practical implications for the hospitality industry include prioritizing employee well-being, creating an inclusive work environment, ensuring flexibility and effective communication, and proactively investing in crisis-appropriate HR practices.

Keywords: women, hospitality, organizational commitment, well-being, HR practices, Spain

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly impacted the tourism sector, including hotels in Spain, causing significant losses and job insecurity that diminished employee motivation and mental health. This crisis led some individuals, particularly those in senior positions, to contemplate transitioning to other sectors, resulting in a talent exodus (Harchandani & Shome, 2021; Filimonau et al., 2020). Research has indicated that job stress during the pandemic decreased job satisfaction and commitment, but human resource practices focusing on emotional support and work-life balance policies have been shown to mitigate stress and enhance job satisfaction (Agarwal, 2022; Park & Kim, 2021).

With a particular focus on the impact of gender bias, a topic that has not been extensively researched, this study examines how HR policies and practices, as perceived by employees, affect organizational commitment

Lourdes Susaeta Erburu, PhD, Corresponding Author, Faculty of Commerce and Tourism, Complutense University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1134-598X>; e-mail: lsusaeta@ucm.es

Clara Martín-Duque, PhD, Faculty of Commerce and Tourism, Complutense University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9270-7200>; e-mail: cmartinduque@ucm.es

Yolanda Romero-Padilla, PhD, Faculty of Commerce and Tourism, Complutense University of Madrid, Madrid, Spain; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9753-5113>; e-mail: yromerop@ucm.es

Esperanza Suárez Ruz, PhD, Business Organization Department, Polytechnic University of Valencia, Valencia, Spain; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4539-9364>; e-mail: esuarezruz@omp.upv.es

before and during the crisis. By analyzing variations in the perception of these practices, the study aims to understand their effectiveness and influence on commitment during challenging times. This knowledge is crucial for developing equitable HR strategies that enhance employee engagement and organizational resilience.

The paper reviews the literature on organizational commitment and human resource policies, analyses the impact of gender discrimination, and outlines the methodology, which includes conducting an online survey within the Spanish hotel industry. It then presents the findings, discusses the results and conclusions, and suggests directions for future research.

2. Theory and hypothesis development

2.1. Organizational commitment, crisis, and HR policies and practices

Organizational commitment, reflecting employees' level of identification with and effort for an organization, is crucial for employee retention, job satisfaction, performance, and productivity (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001). During times of crisis, organizations with high organizational commitment exhibit greater resilience and capacity to face challenges, as committed employees are more motivated and efficient in overcoming adversities and strengthening organizational capabilities. Effective Human Resources (HR) management becomes critical during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which has significantly impacted employee well-being and commitment, particularly in the hospitality industry. Organizations must reassess their HR practices to support employee welfare, adapting to the pandemic to maintain person-environment fit and address potential misalignments. Further research is required to adjust HR practices to the evolving needs of employees under extraordinary circumstances, to understand how the crisis affects employee commitment and to develop strategies to mitigate adverse effects, essential for effective workforce management in the hospitality industry during and post-crisis (Korkmaz et al., 2022; Schmude et al., 2021; Šuligoj, 2022).

2.2. Well-being-oriented practices versus productivity-oriented practices

Academic literature has extensively debated the effectiveness of well-being and performance practices in human resources during crises. Research conducted by Zhang et al. (2022) underscores the significance of well-being practices in enhancing employees' emotional and physical well-being, thus diminishing stress and bolstering commitment and job satisfaction. Conversely, Cascio (2014) has accentuated the imperative of modulating performance practices during such periods. Investigations, such as the one by Hayat and Afshari (2021), have illustrated that focusing on employee safety and well-being amidst the COVID-19 crisis has benefited job satisfaction and engagement in the hospitality sector. Furthermore, Agarwal (2021) highlights the importance of flexible work policies and pre-existing, well-being-oriented HR practices in maintaining employee well-being and commitment throughout the pandemic, underscoring the value of these crisis-adapted practices.

The study addresses several HR policies and practices relevant to employee well-being in the hotel sector during the COVID-19 pandemic:

Labour flexibility: allows firms to adapt working conditions to changing markets, which increases efficiency and worker satisfaction (Bosch & Weinkopf, 2017). However, excessive flexibility can hurt organizational commitment (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). The pandemic has highlighted the necessity of flexible working practices in the hospitality sector, but further research is needed to understand their implementation and impact (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2021).

Effective communication is critical to organizational commitment and requires clarity and consistency to avoid diminishing commitment (Nikolaou et al., 2011; Susaeta et al., 2013). During the pandemic, particularly regarding safety protocols in hotels, clear and frequent updates from leaders were essential for building employee trust (Guzzo et al., 2021; Dirani et al., 2020).

Training is critical for job performance and personal growth (Christian et al., 2011), especially in adapting to pandemic-related changes in the hospitality sector (Sigala, 2020; Huang et al., 2021).

Job stability is essential for well-being in the hospitality industry. However, excessive stability leads to complacency (Akgunduz & Eryilmaz, 2018; Llorens et al., 2007). Job insecurity undermines the intention to stay (Salem et al., 2022), and the pandemic has increased the focus on stability amid operational changes (Baum et al., 2020; Filimonau et al., 2020).

Development opportunities are crucial to engagement and satisfaction, though more than individual development, they can inhibit teamwork and organizational goals (Inceoglu et al., 2018). The pandemic has increased their importance in the hospitality industry (Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021), though their effectiveness can be hindered by job instability and safety concerns (Jiang et al., 2022).

Wage advances, supported by organizational culture, benefit job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions (Thomsen, 1997; Le Blanc et al., 2019). Some companies in Spain offered advances to temporary workers (ERTE) during the pandemic due to government benefit delays.

Given the significance of these HR practices on well-being and commitment, the paper proposes the following hypothesis:

H1: Companies that had already implemented HR practices promoting employee well-being before the pandemic could maintain or increase levels of organizational commitment during the crisis.

Based on this hypothesis, our study aims to identify HR practices that foster employee well-being and have proven effective in maintaining or increasing levels of organizational commitment during times of crisis.

Table 1
HR policies and practices analyzed in the study

| HR practices and policies | Key ideas and controversies | References |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Labor flexibility | Implement labor flexibility practices to adjust working conditions according to the needs and changes in the labor market. | Bosch & Weinkopf, 2017; Gallie & Zhou, 2013; Eaton, 2003; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; with Lambert et al., 2019; Huang et al., 2021; Giousmpasoglou et al., 2021 |
| Communication | Foster effective communication practices, ensuring transparent and frequent communication from organizational leaders during the COVID-19 crisis. | Guzzo et al., 2021; Brown & Roloff, 2011; Nikolaou et al., 2011; Susaeta et al., 2013; Dirani et al., 2020 |
| Training | Prioritize training and skills development, particularly in the context of the pandemic, to adapt to changes and maintain safety and customer well-being. | Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Christian et al., 2011; Sigala, 2020; Huang et al., 2021 |
| Job stability | Emphasize job stability and address uncertainty and changing policies to ensure employee well-being in the hospitality industry. | De Witte, 1999; Akgunduz & Eryilmaz, 2018; Llorens et al., 2007; Baum et al., 2020; Filimonau et al., 2020; Salem et al., 2022 |
| Development opportunities | Provide career development opportunities to enhance employee engagement, job satisfaction, and personal and professional growth. | Hughes et al., 2008; Maxwell et al., 2010; Demerouti et al., 2010; Inceoglu et al., 2018; Kaushal & Srivastava, 2021; Jiang et al., 2022 |
| Salary advances | Implement salary advance policies to improve job satisfaction and reduce turnover intentions, particularly during economic hardships. | Thomsen, 1997; Le Blanc et al., 2019 |

Source: Own elaboration.

2.3. Gender discrimination and organizational commitment

Gender equality in the workplace, researched for over two decades across various sectors, including tourism (Liff & Ward, 2001; Boone et al., 2013), is affected by deep-rooted social inequalities such as task segregation and gender-based social roles (Martín-Duque & Romero-Padilla, 2023; Santero-Sánchez et al., 2015). Gender discrimination significantly impacts employee commitment, and discriminatory practices like wage gaps and limited advancement opportunities (Konrad & Mangel, 2000) reduce organizational commitment,

affecting productivity and performance (Ruggs et al., 2015). During the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing workplace gender discrimination has become increasingly vital, especially in the hotel industry, where the pandemic has exacerbated gender inequalities, leading to disproportionate job losses and reduced working hours for women (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2021). Organizations implementing anti-gender bias policies during this crisis observed higher organizational commitment levels.

Effectively addressing gender discrimination boosts employee commitment and ensures a fair workplace. This research explores policies to curb such discrimination, including:

Equal Pay: The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the gender pay gap, particularly in Spain's hotel industry, due to wage secrecy and discrimination (Martinez-Bravo, 2021; Campos-Soria et al., 2015). Further research is needed to determine the pandemic's impact on this disparity (Casado et al., 2021).

Implementing Equality Plans: In Spain, firms with over 50 employees must adopt Equality Plans to combat gender discrimination and promote workplace equality (Hernández-Ruiz et al., 2022). These plans may enhance women's employment conditions and overall company performance, but their full impact still needs more research.

Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Companies that implemented policies during COVID-19 aimed at preventing gender bias have achieved higher levels of organizational commitment during the crisis.

Table 2
Gender policies analyzed in the study

| Antidiscrimination practices and policies | Key ideas and controversies | References |
|---|---|--|
| Equal pay | Evidence suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the gender pay gap in certain countries, such as Spain. | Martinez-Bravo, 2021; Clark et al., 2021 |
| Wage opacity and discrimination | Studies addressing the gender pay gap in the hotel sector have highlighted factors like wage opacity and discrimination as critical contributors to the disparity. | Campos-Soria et al., 2015; Al-Ismail, 2019 |
| Implementation of equality plans | The Equality Plan is a mandatory tool for companies with over 50 employees in Spain to ensure equal treatment and opportunities for women and men in the workplace. | González-López et al., 2019 |

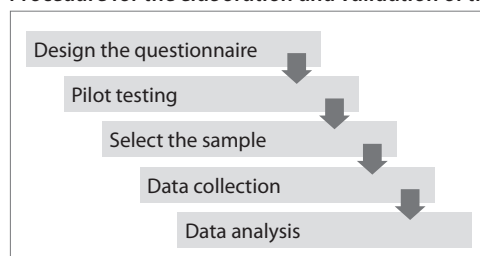
Source: Own elaboration.

3. Research design and method

3.1. The survey

The survey, designed in February 2021 and piloted for validation, was distributed via email by the Spanish Confederation of Hotel and Restaurant Businesses (CEHE) in mid-March and April 2021. After collecting 467 complete responses, the data were cleaned, errors corrected and analyzed using SPSS software version 28.11, with a sampling error of ± 4.53 at 95% confidence (details in Figure 1).

Figure 1
Procedure for the elaboration and validation of the questionnaire



Source: Own elaboration.

3.2. Measures

The scale measuring organizational commitment, adapted from a validated scale by Kehoe and Wright (2013), included 19 items focused on perceptions of HR practices related to employee well-being and their relevance to organizational commitment during COVID-19. The questionnaire was divided into two sections assessing HR policies before and after COVID, using a 5-point Likert scale from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree."

3.3. Sample profile

In the sample, 57,6 % of the participants were female workers. The participants had a mean age of 29.73 (SD = 12.92) and an average organizational tenure of 1.18 years (SD = 1.48). A total of 40.7% are managers, 28.3% are middle managers, and 31% are at the operational level. Respondents have worked in the hotel sector for an average of 17.73 years (SD:10,83) and in their current company for 13.3 years (SD: 9,6).

3.4. Procedure of analysis

A two-step analysis has been performed. In the first step, factor analysis (FA) was used to reduce the number of variables to fewer factors. In the second step, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed in AMOS to determine the measurement model's convergent and discriminant validity.

4. Results

This section details the study's findings, including exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis (EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) and CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis)) and correlations among variables. It identifies organizational commitment factors before and during COVID-19 and explores correlations between HR practices, employee perceptions, and commitment levels, particularly during crises.

4.1. First step: Factor analysis

4.1.1. Factor analysis variables before COVID

Factor analysis of variables measured before the pandemic indicates that only one factor explains 56% of the variance in the "BEFORE" measure, with a reliable Cronbach's alpha of 0.8356.

Table 3
Factor analysis and variables

| Before Covid-19 | Mean | SD | Cronbach's alpha | Explained variance |
|---|------|------|------------------|--------------------|
| Factor 1 BC: "HR-driven commitment" | | | | |
| Promoted work-life balance | 3.75 | 1.16 | 0.836 | 56% |
| Encouraged flexible schedules | 3.66 | 1.27 | | |
| Provided job stability | 4.24 | 1.05 | | |
| Offered professional development opportunities | 3.33 | 1.38 | | |
| Protected against gender discrimination | 4.02 | 1.29 | | |
| Was a good place to work | 4.39 | 0.90 | | |
| During Covid-19 | Mean | SD | Cronbach's alpha | Explained variance |
| Factor 1 DC: "Flexible employee support and communication" | | | | |
| Open communication with employees | 3.7 | 1.44 | 0.746 | 39.77% |
| Work-life balance | 3.43 | 1.50 | | |
| Schedule flexibility | 3.3 | 1.57 | | |
| Clear information on SEPE procedures | 3.85 | 1.44 | | |

Table 3 (continued)

| Factor 2 DC: "Gender equality and inclusion" | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|---------------|
| No gender pay gap increase during | 4.37 | 1.18 | 0.746 | 19.96% |
| No gender discrimination experienced during | 4.39 | 1.20 | | |
| Factor 3 DC: "Adaptive staffing measures" | | | | |
| Granted early vacations | 2.33 | 1.57 | 0.746 | 13.84% |
| Assigned employees to different tasks | 2.64 | 1.55 | | |
| Total | | | | 73.57% |
| N=467 | | | | |

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3 reveals that Factor 1BC, termed "HR-Driven Commitment," accounts for 56% of the variance and includes variables related to positively perceived HR policies and practices. Variables like the telecommuting facility, salary gap, and the equality plan, which did not align significantly with the underlying factor of organizational commitment, suggest that these aspects do not share the exact latent dimensions influencing the variability of the included variables.

4.1.2. Factor analysis variables during COVID

For the variables analyzed during the COVID-19 period, the factorial analysis results in three factors that explain 70.57% of the cumulative variance. Cronbach's alpha for the measurement is 0.7459 (acceptable).

The three factors obtained from the factorial analysis are Factor 1 DC: "Flexible Employee Support and Communication," Factor 2 DC: "Gender Equality and Inclusion," and Factor 3 DC: "Adaptive Staffing Measures."

Factor 1 DC: "Flexible Employee Support and Communication" includes open communication with employees, work-life balance, schedule flexibility, and transparent information on SEPE procedures. The mean scores for these variables range from 3.30 to 3.85, with an SD ranging from 1.44 to 1.57. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for this factor is 0.7459, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. The explained variance for Factor 1 DC is 39.77%.

Factor 2 DC: "Gender Equality and Inclusion" includes variables such as no gender pay gap increase during COVID-19, and no gender discrimination experienced during COVID-19. The mean scores for these variables are 4.38 and 4.39, respectively, with SDs of 1.18 and 1.20.

Factor 3 DC: "Adaptive Staffing Measures" includes variables such as granted early vacations and assigned employees to different tasks. The mean scores for these variables are 2.33 and 2.64, respectively, with SDs of 1.57 and 1.55. The explained variance for Factor 3 DC is 13.84%.

These findings suggest that the practices related to flexible employee support and communication (Factor 1 DC) received relatively higher scores, with mean values above 3.30 for all variables. The explained variance for Factor 1 DC is 39.77%, indicating that this factor explains a significant portion of the variability in the data. Before COVID-19, the HR-driven commitment factor (Factor 1 BC) received even higher scores, with a higher explained variance of 56%. The factors related to gender equality and inclusion (Factor 2 DC) were also well-regarded by employees, as indicated by their mean scores of 4.38 and 4.39. On the other hand, the adaptive staffing measures (Factor 3 DC) received lower ratings, suggesting that employees did not appreciate these practices well.

4.2. Second step: Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) could not be conducted for the "BEFORE" measures due to the lack of three first-order factors, as recommended by Kline (2011). However, the "DURING" measures showed

satisfactory results in CFA with a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), both above 0.90, indicating good model fit. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) were within acceptable limits, the latter at 0.04. Given the non-normal distribution of measures, Spearman correlations were used to assess factor relationships, which is suitable for social science research.

4.3. Hypothesis testing

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of factors regarding employee satisfaction, where a scale of 1 indicates "not satisfied at all", and a scale of 5 indicates "very satisfied." Higher satisfaction implies a factor that leads to a more significant commitment.

For F1_BC_HR_Driven_Commitment, the mean score is 3.90, with a standard deviation of 0.88, based on responses from 467 participants. This fact suggests a moderate to high perception of HR-driven commitment among employees.

Regarding F1_DC_Flexible_Employee_Support_Communication, the mean score is 3.64, with a standard deviation of 1.17, based on the same sample size. This result indicates a moderate perception of flexible employee support communication.

For F2_DC_Gender_Equality_Inclusion, the mean score is 4.38, with a standard deviation of 1.0922. This result indicates a high perception of gender equality and inclusion within the organization.

Lastly, F3_DC_Adaptive_Staffing_Measures shows a mean score of 2.48, with a standard deviation 1.29. This result suggests that employees perceive adaptive staffing measures relatively poorly.

These descriptive statistics provide insights into the average levels of employee satisfaction and the variability within each factor, indicating each factor's perceived strength or weakness based on the given scale.

Table 4
Descriptive statistics for factors

| Descriptive statistics | | | |
|---|------|--------------|-----|
| | Mean | St deviation | N |
| F1_BC_HR_Driven_Commitment | 3.90 | 0.88 | 467 |
| F1_DC_Flexible_Employee_Support_Communication | 3.63 | 1.17 | 467 |
| F2_DC_Gender_Equality_Inclusion | 4.38 | 1.09 | 467 |
| F3_DC_Adaptive_Staffing_Measures | 2.48 | 1.29 | 467 |

Source: Own elaboration.

The correlation analysis revealed significant findings among the variables, as presented in Table 5. Regarding F1_BC_HR_Driven_Commitment, a significant positive correlation was found with F1_DC_Flexible_Employee_Support_Communication ($\rho = 0.72$, $p < 0.001$). This result suggests that Employees who had a positive perception of the company's efforts to foster HR-driven commitment through HR practices before the COVID-19 pandemic exhibited a positive perception of the communication and flexibility policies that the company developed during the COVID-19 period. However, no significant correlations were observed between F1_BC_HR_Driven_Commitment and either F2_DC_Gender_Equality_Inclusion or F3_DC_Adaptive_Staffing_Measures.

These results confirm Hypothesis 1, suggesting that companies with pre-pandemic employee well-being-focused HR practices experienced higher organizational commitment during the crisis than those without such practices. This finding supports the role of proactive, well-being-oriented HR practices in enhancing organizational commitment in times of crisis.

Table 5
Correlations among factors

| Correlations | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | F1_BC_HR_Driven_Commitment | F1_DC_Flexible_Employee_Support_Communication | F2_DC_Gender_Equality_Inclusion | F3_DC_Adaptive_Staffing_Measures |
| Rho de Spearman | F1_BC_HR_Driven_Commitment | Correlation coefficient | -- | |
| Sig. (bilateral) | . | | | |
| N | 467 | | | |
| F1_DC_Flexible_Employee_Support_Communication | Correlation coefficient | 0.72** | -- | |
| Sig. (bilateral) | <.001 | . | | |
| N | 467 | 467 | | |
| F2_DC_Gender_Equality_Inclusion | Correlation coefficient | 0.13** | 0.13** | -- |
| Sig. (bilateral) | 0.004 | 0.005 | . | |
| N | 467 | 467 | 467 | |
| F3_DC_Adaptive_Staffing_Measures | Correlation coefficient | 0.07 | 0,02 | 0.157** |
| Sig. (bilateral) | 0.11 | 0.62 | <.001 | . |
| N | 467 | 467 | 467 | 467 |

Source: Own elaboration.

** The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

In relation to F2_DC_Gender_Equality_Inclusion, it showed significant positive correlations with both F1_BC_HR_Driven_Commitment ($\rho = 0.13$, $p = 0.004$) and F1_DC_Flexible_Employee_Support_Communication ($\rho = 0.13$, $p = 0.005$). This result indicates that organizations that promote gender equality and inclusion are likely to see higher levels of HR-driven commitment and perceptions of supportive communication.

On the other hand, no significant correlation was found between F3_DC_Adaptive_Staffing_Measures and F1_BC_HR_Driven_Commitment. However, a significant negative correlation was observed between F3_DC_Adaptive_Staffing_Measures and F1_DC_Flexible_Employee_Support_Communication ($\rho = -0.16$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of adaptive staffing measures are associated with lower perceptions of flexible employee support communication.

These results, from a sample of 467 participants, underscore the impact of flexible support, communication, and gender equality initiatives on HR-driven commitment. They partially support Hypothesis 2, indicating that organizations that implemented policies to address gender bias during COVID-19 experienced higher levels of organizational commitment. Although more research is needed to understand this relationship, especially in crises fully, this provides evidence that such policies can increase commitment.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This section discusses the document's theoretical and practical implications, noting the limited empirical evidence, especially within the hotel sector, regarding the impact of HR practices centred on employee well-being.

5.1. Theoretical implications

The results support Hypothesis 1, showing that companies with pre-pandemic well-being-focused HR practices saw higher organizational commitment during COVID-19. The strong correlation found (see Table 5) suggests that companies previously implementing HR policies, which employees positively perceived,

are the ones that employees perceived as making more positive efforts in communication and flexibility during COVID-19.

This research contributes to the body of knowledge by highlighting the importance of wellness-oriented HR practices in fostering organizational commitment during times of crisis, a notion supported by the work of Carnevale and Hatak (2020) and Zientara et al. (2021). As Jiang et al. (2022) noted, a high-commitment HRM (Human Resource Management) approach contrasts with the prevailing focus on HR strategies aimed at high performance. In addition, the research shows that an employee's work-life balance and flexibility are predictive of commitment. This result is consistent with the findings of Huang et al. (2007). Furthermore, the study highlights the critical role of managers' communication strategies in crises, as effective communication significantly increases employee commitment. This result works with the previous studies highlighting the positive effects of transparent communication on the relationship between employees and the organization.

The results support hypothesis 2, showing that organizations implementing gender bias prevention policies during the COVID-19 crisis have seen higher organizational commitment. These findings align with literature emphasizing the importance of such policies for creating inclusive environments and boosting commitment (Ensher et al., 2001; Kochan et al., 2003). Research highlights that gender diversity initiatives correlate positively with commitment (Ng & Wyrick, 2011), and non-discrimination policies are vital for valuing workplace diversity (Cachat-Rosset et al., 2019).

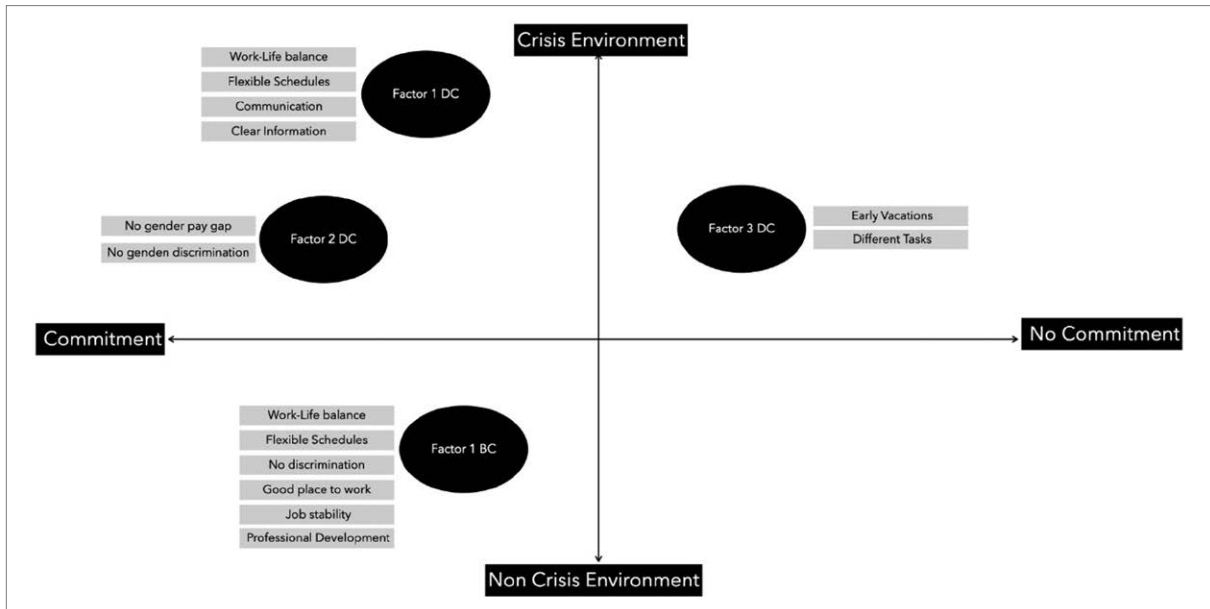
The study also finds that gender inequalities, especially those that manifest themselves in wage differentials, negatively affect organizational commitment among all employees in the Spanish hospitality sector. This issue is related to the persistence of gender stereotypes, such as the expectation that women should fulfil caregiving roles, which conflicts with their professional responsibilities and hinders their career advancement (Martín-Duque & Romero-Padilla, 2023; Ballout, 2008). Female managers, for example, are criticized for being perceived as indecisive and are judged according to standards that value assertiveness, a trait traditionally associated with masculinity (Hogue et al., 2010). These stereotypes block women from advancing, damage their self-esteem, and encourage them to accept less prestigious roles (Dickerson & Taylor, 2000). Such biases, often held unconsciously by both men and women, marginalize contributions perceived as feminine and devalue women's roles in organizations (Fletcher, 2002). Interestingly, the study does not find significant gender differences in organizational commitment. This finding suggests that in organizations where gender bias is prevalent, employee commitment tends to be lower.

The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted gender dynamics in the hospitality industry, exacerbating challenges for women who play a significant role in the workforce while managing societal expectations for domestic and caregiving roles (Baum et al., 2020). This situation has exacerbated existing disparities and brought discussions of gender equity to the forefront of industry dialogue (Martín-Duque & Romero-Padilla, 2023).

Notably, pre-pandemic data did not identify gender bias as a significant factor in organizational commitment. However, the current situation reveals a shift in employee awareness and attitudes toward gender issues, highlighting the need for corporate and academic efforts to address these changes. Future research should examine various factors, including organizational culture, representation of women in leadership positions, and HR policies on selection, promotion, and career development, to develop more inclusive and resilient frameworks for women in the hospitality industry.

Furthermore, the research categorizes HR practices into crisis-appropriate/inappropriate and commitment/non-commitment categories (see Figure 2). It finds that communication, flexibility, and non-discrimination or diversity policies are most effective for fostering commitment during crises. These well-being-oriented practices prove their value and relevance in challenging times, unlike performance-based practices like anticipating holidays or reassigning duties, which need to be received positively.

Figure 2
Typology of human resource practices and context



Source: Own elaboration.

In contrast, during non-crisis periods, well-being-oriented practices like work-life balance, flexible scheduling, communication, and performance-related practices such as job stability and professional development significantly foster commitment (Zhang et al., 2022). Organizations should adopt a balanced approach that combines these elements to enhance commitment and engagement, supporting a culture that promotes personal and professional development, thereby boosting organizational commitment and productivity (McDonald & Hite, 2005).

This paper highlights the importance of HR practices in understanding and measuring organizational commitment, emphasizing proactive policies and the significance of flexibility, communication, and gender equality in enhancing commitment.

5.2. Practical implications

Based on this academic paper, the hospitality industry has several practical implications. First, it is essential to prioritize employee well-being, particularly during crises, by implementing HR practices that promote work-life balance, flexible schedules, and effective communication to enhance organizational commitment.

Organizations must adapt their HR strategies to address crisis-specific employee needs, which helps increase commitment promptly. Moreover, creating an inclusive environment that actively addresses gender bias and promotes diversity is crucial for fostering a supportive and committed workforce.

Flexibility and effective communication are particularly vital during crises. Establishing flexible work arrangements and transparent communication channels builds employee trust and commitment.

Investing actively in HR practices focusing on employee well-being before crises occur, is vital. Such practices include supporting professional development, ensuring job stability, and cultivating a positive work culture. These measures lay a strong foundation for navigating challenging times.

By adopting these strategies, hospitality organizations can boost employee commitment, satisfaction, and overall performance, ultimately leading to better organizational outcomes even in times of crisis.

6. Limitations and future research

This paper acknowledges specific limitations that delineate avenues for future scholarly inquiry. The absence of a pre-tested model suitable for structural equation modelling confines the extensibility of our findings. Our inquiry's concentration on a select cadre of HR practices potentially neglects additional influential variables or alternative HR modalities. Subsequent research should incorporate a more expansive array of variables and examine a broader spectrum of HR practices.

A deeper analysis of mediating factors such as job satisfaction, perceived fairness, and organizational support would shed more light on the nexus between HR practices, gender bias, and organizational commitment. Furthermore, longitudinal studies observing the long-term influence of HR practices over multiple crises would provide valuable insights into organizational resilience and adaptability.

Cross-cultural and cross-industrial comparative analyses, particularly within the hospitality sector, comparing outcomes from Spain to those from other nations or industries, would enrich our understanding of different institutional contexts on HR and commitment. This approach would reveal how various cultural and sectoral contexts affect the relationship between HR practices and organizational commitment.

The paper could extend its conclusions by delving into a more detailed analysis of the underlying reasons for our findings and explicitly considering women's role in the business environment. Such an approach would broaden the discourse, make a substantive contribution to the literature on HR practices and organizational commitment, and point the way forward for developing inclusive and gender-sensitive HR policies.

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