

The relationship between Responsible Leadership and Employee Turnover Intention in the Hotel Industry

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Resumo

Nos últimos anos, o setor hoteleiro tem enfrentado desafios significativos relacionados à alta rotatividade voluntária de colaboradores, o que afeta negativamente a produtividade, a qualidade do serviço e a satisfação dos clientes. Diante deste cenário, a liderança responsável surge como uma abordagem capaz de mitigar os impactos da rotatividade, promovendo um ambiente de trabalho mais ético, sustentável e focado no bem-estar dos colaboradores. Este estudo tem como objetivo investigar a relação entre a liderança responsável e a intenção de rotatividade dos colaboradores no setor hoteleiro, analisando o papel mediador da qualidade de vida no trabalho e do bem-estar no trabalho.

Para analisar empiricamente o modelo proposto, foi adotada uma abordagem quantitativa correlacional, com dados recolhidos através de um questionário online respondido por 267 colaboradores do setor hoteleiro em Portugal. Os dados foram analisados utilizando o software PROCESS para IBM SPSS 29, com foco nas interações entre liderança responsável, qualidade de vida no trabalho, bem-estar e intenção de rotatividade.

Os resultados revelaram que a liderança responsável tem um impacto direto significativo sobre a intenção de rotatividade, exerce uma influência direta relevante ao melhorar a qualidade de vida no trabalho e o bem-estar dos colaboradores. Esses fatores, por sua vez, reduzem significativamente a intenção de rotatividade, reforçando a importância de uma liderança centrada no desenvolvimento humano e no equilíbrio entre a vida profissional e pessoal.

Este estudo contribui para a literatura ao evidenciar que a adoção de práticas de liderança responsável pode ser uma estratégia eficaz para aumentar a retenção de talentos no setor hoteleiro, promovendo não apenas o desempenho organizacional, mas também o bem-estar dos colaboradores.

Palavra-Chave: Liderança Responsável; intenção de turnover; qualidade de vida no trabalho; bem-estar no trabalho.

Códigos de Classificação JEL: O15 Human Resources; D23 Organizational Behavior.

Abstract

In recent years, the hotel industry has faced significant challenges related to high employee voluntary turnover, which negatively impacts productivity, service quality, and customer satisfaction. Considering this, responsible leadership emerges as an approach capable of mitigating the effects of employee turnover by promoting a more ethical, sustainable, and employee-focused work environment. This study aims to investigate the relationship between responsible leadership and employee turnover intention in the hotel industry, examining the mediating role of quality of work life and workplace well-being.

To empirically analyze the proposed model, a quantitative correlational approach was adopted, with data collected via an online questionnaire completed by 267 hotel industry employees in Portugal. The data were analyzed using the PROCESS software for IBM SPSS 29, focusing on the interrelationships between responsible leadership, quality of work life, well-being, and turnover intention.

The results revealed that responsible leadership has a significant direct impact on turnover intention, exerting a relevant direct influence by enhancing employees' quality of work life and well-being. These factors, in turn, significantly reduce turnover intention, reinforcing the importance of leadership focused on human development and the balance between professional and personal life.

This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that adopting responsible leadership practices can be an effective strategy for increasing talent retention in the hotel industry, promoting not only organizational performance but also employee well-being.

Key-words: Responsible leadership; turnover intention; quality of work life; well-being at work.

JEL classification codes: O15 Human Resources; D23 Organizational Behavior..

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Introduction

Modern organizations face new challenges both at the personal and organizational levels, as highlighted by Calo (2008), including a significant increase in racial and ethnic diversity, the emergence of new technologies, and growing market competitiveness. These factors have led to a qualitative and quantitative demand for new skills in the workforce, while the availability of cheap labor is decreasing, potentially resulting in a shortage of qualified workers.

In addition to the intense workload, the hospitality sector involves constant and direct interactions with customers, requiring exceptional interpersonal skills and a service-oriented approach focused on customer satisfaction, often under pressure (Deery, 2008). The expectation to provide a personalized and welcoming experience raises management demands and increases workers' exposure to immediate feedback, both positive and negative, from customers. This environment creates a cycle of emotional strain, as employees must continuously manage their own emotions to maintain a professional demeanor, regardless of challenges or customer behavior (Chen et al., 2018). This constant pressure, coupled with the demand for high-quality standards, makes hospitality employees more vulnerable to mental health issues and job dissatisfaction, directly impacting talent retention within the sector (Deery & Jago, 2015).

These combined factors result in a high turnover rate, as employees often leave the sector in search of better working conditions and a greater work-life balance. Consequently, the hospitality industry faces the challenge of creating a more sustainable work environment that values employee well-being and promotes leadership practices and strategies that can enhance quality of work life, increase well-being, and reduce turnover intentions. This approach ultimately fosters a more positive work environment and contributes to the sector's competitiveness (Baum, 2008). The added pressure to manage high expectations and maintain service standards frequently leads to poor quality of work life, contributing to conflicts between personal and professional life and increasing dissatisfaction and turnover rates (Duarte et al., 2023).

Turnover in the hospitality sector, in addition to representing a significant financial cost, negatively impacts productivity and organizational competitiveness. Frequent employee departures create instability in the work environment, affecting both employee satisfaction and the quality of service offered, with direct impacts on the company's reputation and efficiency (Münderlein et al., 2013).

In this context, responsible leadership emerges as a strategic approach to mitigate these issues, emphasizing the well-being and development of employees, as it directly impacts the quality of services provided. When employees feel valued and motivated, they tend to demonstrate greater empathy and dedication in customer service (Freire & Gonçalves, 2021).

In the hospitality sector, responsible leadership can reduce turnover by implementing policies that improve the quality of work life, such as flexible scheduling and the creation of conditions that support work-life balance. Additionally, responsible leaders promote employee well-being through sustainable organizational practices, reinforcing the importance of a healthy work environment (Boiral et al., 2014).

Responsible leadership in the hospitality sector positively influences employee well-being by creating an environment where they feel valued, supported, and respected, which is crucial in a highly demanding work context (Karatepe, 2010). Maak and Pless (2005) argue that responsible leaders create conditions that promote emotional support and recognition, reducing stress and emotional exhaustion. This support increases job satisfaction and facilitates a better work-life balance, which is essential for reducing turnover intentions (Karatepe & Karadas, 2012). Consequently, the work environment becomes more productive and healthier, with more committed and motivated employees, which directly reflects on the quality of service provided and organizational success (Oliveira et al., 2021).

Furthermore, leadership influences quality of work life by establishing an environment that goes beyond financial aspects, promoting emotional support, professional development, and job security, which are crucial elements for employee satisfaction and well-being (Castillo et al., 2020). Studies highlight that positive leadership styles, such as responsible leadership that prioritizes employee well-being, contribute to a supportive and trusting environment, reducing stress and improving job satisfaction (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Maak & Pless, 2005; Suriñach et al., 2008). These leadership styles promote healthy interpersonal relationships and a positive organizational climate, essential for a good work-life balance and for retaining employees, especially in the hospitality sector, where emotional demands are high (Lee et al., 2015; Tian & Suo, 2021).

By strengthening these practices, responsible leadership also contributes to building trust between leaders and employees, which is essential for addressing the sector's specific challenges. These leaders aim to maximize organizational performance and build trusting relationships with their employees and other stakeholders, while fostering a healthy work environment based on social and human values (Maak & Pless, 2006). Through responsible leadership, managers can contribute to reducing turnover by promoting employee well-being

while reinforcing the importance of sustainable and ethical workplace practices (Boiral et al., 2014).

This research seeks to verify whether there is a relationship between responsible leadership and employee turnover intention in the hospitality sector. Additionally, it aims to understand how quality of work life and workplace well-being may mediate this relationship. Responsible leadership is understood as an approach that values employee well-being and social responsibility, promoting a healthier and more sustainable work environment (Voegtlin et al., 2012). The proposal to investigate quality of work life and workplace well-being as sequential mediators makes sense since these variables are interconnected and follow a gradual influence logic. Responsible leadership, by improving quality of work life, creates an environment that favors employee well-being. This means that responsible leadership initially affects quality of work life, which, in turn, increases well-being. This increase in well-being is reflected in higher levels of satisfaction and lower turnover intention. Therefore, the logical mediation sequence is that responsible leadership improves quality of work life, which in turn enhances well-being, culminating in lower turnover intention.

In this study, it is proposed that responsible leadership has a negative impact on turnover intention by improving both work-life balance and workplace well-being.

Based on this, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: What is the impact of responsible leadership on employees' turnover intentions in the hospitality sector? Does quality of work life mediate the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intentions? Does workplace well-being mediate the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intentions? Finally, do quality of work life and workplace well-being sequentially mediate the impact of responsible leadership on turnover intentions?

To provide a deeper understanding of these research questions, the following chapter presents a literature review that contextualizes the investigation and outlines the key themes of the study: responsible leadership, quality of work life, workplace well-being, and turnover intention.

These areas form the basis for the hypotheses that guide the investigation. The methodology used for the empirical research, including the sample, procedure, and operationalization of variables, will then be described. Subsequently, the research results will be presented and discussed. Finally, the main conclusions will be highlighted, along with the study's limitations and suggestions for future research, emphasizing implications both in the academic context and in the hospitality sector.

Part I - Literature Review

1.1. Responsible Leadership

Organizations are composed of various elements, with leadership being fundamental in managing people and making decisions to achieve both organizational and individual goals. Leadership is a dynamic interaction between leaders and subordinates, present in all organizations, guiding teams to reach common goals (Bhatti et al., 2022; Sousa & Santo, 2010).

This is where responsible leadership emerges as a crucial factor, especially in the hospitality sector. Responsible leadership is characterized by coordinating actions aimed at achieving a shared and meaningful vision for the business (Pless & Maak, 2011; Waldman et al., 2008;). By promoting active dialogue and balancing the interests of different groups, responsible leadership benefits both individuals and the organization (Maak, 2007; Voegtlin, 2011).

According to Freire and Gonçalves (2021), this form of leadership not only aims for organizational success but also considers the impact of its actions on various stakeholders and society. By adopting an ethical and socially conscious approach, responsible leaders promote a work environment that encourages proactive and collaborative behaviors among employees, known as organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB). In the hospitality sector, where interactions between employees and customers are fundamental to service quality, responsible leadership plays a central role (Freire & Gonçalves, 2021).

Castillo et al. (2020) highlight that the development of responsible leaders is profoundly shaped by the social and professional contexts in which they are formed, directly influencing their practices and approaches. In the hospitality sector, where interpersonal interactions and the quality of customer experience are essential, this contextual formation is particularly significant (Madera et al., 2017). Traditionally, the focus in hospitality has been on external stakeholders, such as clients and investors, which leads leadership practices to prioritize customer satisfaction and financial return (Kim et al., 2020). However, Castillo et al. suggest that by reconfiguring this focus to include particular attention to internal stakeholders — namely, the employees themselves — leaders can foster a more inclusive and sustainable organizational culture, aligned with Pless and Maak's (2011) idea that responsible leadership should balance the interests of different stakeholders, promoting an ethical and inclusive culture.

When leaders in the hospitality sector adopt a responsible leadership approach that values employee well-being and development, they cease to be merely managers focused on external

results and become mentors who facilitate growth and job satisfaction (Voegtlin, 2011). This internal support is directly reflected in the quality of services provided, as valued and motivated employees tend to demonstrate greater empathy and dedication in customer service (Freire & Gonçalves, 2021). Additionally, by balancing the focus between customers and employees, leaders demonstrate a responsible vision, fostering an organizational culture where all stakeholders feel part of a shared objective (Pless & Maak, 2011).

Freire and Gonçalves (2021) further emphasize that this responsible leadership fosters an organizational environment where employees strongly identify with the company's mission and goals focused on collective well-being.

This type of leadership has shown significant impact on companies' strategic agility, especially in times of crisis. The study by Chang et al. (2023) demonstrates how, during the COVID-19 pandemic, responsible leaders in the hospitality sector in Taiwan quickly adapted their operations to ensure business continuity. In highly uncertain contexts, responsible leadership promoted strategic sensitivity, enabling organizations to anticipate and respond swiftly to market changes. This rapid adaptation was facilitated by responsible leadership, which enabled the restructuring of services and the conversion of hotels into quarantine facilities. This approach not only protected stakeholders but also ensured business viability, preserved jobs, and helped companies maintain their reputation, contributing to a faster post-pandemic recovery. This agile response highlighted the importance of leadership that prioritizes not only financial performance but also the social and environmental well-being of its stakeholders (Chang et al., 2023).

Studies such as Miska and Mendenhall (2018) demonstrate that, although responsible leadership aims to benefit all stakeholders, it places a particular emphasis on employees, who are highly influenced by ethical and responsible leadership practices. This focus on employees is reflected in more positive attitudes and behaviors, fostering a work environment where ethics and collaboration are strengthened. For instance, Cheng et al. (2019) explore the cascading effect of responsible leadership, showing that ethical behaviors adopted by influential leaders directly impact other managers, who in turn replicate these practices within their teams. These practices include ethical behaviors such as transparency, mutual respect, open communication, and a commitment to integrity in daily decisions and actions. Additionally, responsible leaders tend to promote cooperation and trust, encouraging team members to act with social responsibility and to consider the impact of their actions on employees and clients (Cheng et al., 2019; Maak & Pless, 2006; Voegtlin, 2011).

This effect is strengthened when there is value alignment between leaders and employees, promoting an organizational culture where responsible attitudes become part of daily practices. Leaders who act as role models inspire others to adopt consistent ethical standards, creating a continuous flow of social responsibility across all organizational levels. This model contributes to the development of a strong organizational culture, where responsible practices permeate the entire structure (Cheng et al., 2019).

Responsible leadership, by balancing ethical, social, and organizational demands, emerges as a fundamental element for the sustainable success of modern companies. According to Pless & Maak (2011), the ability of leaders to promote trust, align values, and adopt inclusive and ethical practices is essential in an increasingly dynamic and complex business environment. Responsible leadership not only improves organizational performance but also promotes the well-being of all stakeholders, as highlighted by Ling et al. (2011). The positive impact of responsible leadership on internal cohesion and strategic agility was clearly demonstrated by Chang et al. (2023), who described the effective adaptation of hospitality companies during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, Ahmad et al. (2020) emphasize that responsible leadership reduces turnover intention by promoting a more cohesive and ethical working environment. The value congruence between leaders and employees, explored by Cheng et al. (2019), also stands out as a crucial factor for creating a healthy and sustainable organizational culture. This suggests that the role of the leader goes far beyond mere process and resource management, responsible leaders shape organizational behavior, fostering more committed and resilient cultures, as stated by Maak & Pless (2006).

Companies that adopt this approach build a sustainable competitive advantage, as employees who feel valued and aligned with the organization's goals demonstrate greater engagement and loyalty (Ling et al., 2011). Investing in responsible leadership is, therefore, an investment in the future of the organization, ensuring not only survival but also growth and prosperity, as emphasized (Voegtlin & Patzer 2020).

As previously mentioned, responsible leadership emerged as a clear response to the challenges that organizations currently face and it is known that responsible leadership shares characteristics with other positive leadership styles, such as transformational, ethical, and authentic leadership. Positive leadership focuses on promoting behaviors that maximize the potential of both employees and the organization, encouraging what works well instead of solely focusing on problems. These leadership styles foster the creation of an environment that

values the well-being and prosperity of individuals, driving organizational excellence (Camaron, 2012; Pless & Maak, 2011).

| Leadership Types Definitions | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Leadership | Authors | Definition |
| Transformational Leadership | Wang (2022) | Transformational leadership creates an environment that strengthens employees' emotional commitment and fosters creativity. This is especially important in dynamic sectors such as hospitality, where innovation and adaptability are essential for success. |
| Ethical Leadership | Brown & Treviño (2009) | Ethical leadership is based on practicing behaviours considered morally correct, both in the leader's personal actions and in interactions with the team. This leadership style values justice and transparency, positioning the leader as a moral reference for employees. |
| Authentic Leadership | Walumbwa et al. (2008) | Authentic and responsible leadership share qualities such as self-awareness and self-regulation, allowing leaders to adjust their decisions according to organizational and market demands, always within an ethical approach. |

Table 1.1- Definition of Different Types of Positive Leadership

In this sense, starting with transformational leadership, it stands out by creating an environment that strengthens employees' emotional commitment and fosters creativity. This is especially important in dynamic sectors such as hospitality, where innovation and adaptability are essential for success (Wang, 2022). However, despite its similarities with responsible leadership, the latter has a broader focus. Miska et al. (2013) highlight that responsible

leadership goes beyond traditional organizational goals by integrating the needs of all stakeholders, both internal and external, with the aim of creating sustainable value, where success is measured not only financially but also by the social and environmental impact of the organization. While both approaches share characteristics such as inspiration and individual attention, the main difference lies in the focus. While transformational leadership is primarily focused on employee development and the achievement of internal goals, responsible leadership broadens this vision by promoting the building of trust relationships with stakeholders and prioritizing ethics, integrity, and broader social transformation (Pless & Maak, 2011; Waldman & Galvin, 2008; Wang, 2022).

Ethical leadership is based on practicing behaviors considered morally correct, both in the leader's personal actions and in interactions with the team (Brown & Treviño, 2009). This leadership style values justice and transparency, positioning the leader as a moral reference for employees. Through effective communication and the use of incentives and corrective measures, the ethical leader guides employees to adopt fair and ethical conduct. This leadership approach is essential for strengthening ethical values within the organization, fostering a culture where responsible behaviors are encouraged and upheld (Brown & Treviño, 2009). However, while ethical leadership establishes internal behavioral standards, responsible leadership goes further by encompassing the care for all stakeholders and a commitment to sustainability (Pless & Maak, 2011).

Furthermore, both authentic and responsible leadership share qualities such as self-awareness and self-regulation, but responsible leadership goes deeper in understanding the emotions and values of stakeholders. This allows leaders to adjust their decisions according to organizational and market demands, always within an ethical approach (Pless & Maak, 2011; Walumbwa et al., 2008). Both have a positive impact on the organization by promoting employee engagement and improving overall performance, but responsible leadership also focuses on human and social capital, promoting the well-being of all involved.

In conclusion, responsible leadership not only improves organizational performance but also promotes the well-being of all stakeholders, as highlighted (Ling et al., 2011). Furthermore, the positive impact of this leadership on internal cohesion and strategic agility was clearly demonstrated during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Chang et al., 2023).

In the diverse and dynamic context of hospitality, where employees manage a range of cultural expectations and client needs, responsible leadership provides a strategic advantage by directly valuing and supporting employees. This approach fosters a cohesive and engaged work

environment, encouraging loyalty and dedication, which translates into high-quality service and an exceptional client experience (Ling et al., 2011). This approach creates a work environment where employees feel recognized, respected, and motivated to contribute their best. This direct support enhances employee commitment, reduces turnover, and fosters a culture of loyalty and dedication to the company, which translates into high-quality service and an exceptional client experience (Ling et al., 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006; Voegtlin, 2011).

Therefore, by investing in responsible leadership, hospitality companies not only strengthen their resilience and responsiveness during uncertain times but also build a sustainable competitive advantage that supports long-term growth and prosperity (Voegtlin & Patzer, 2020).

1.2. Quality of Work Life

Quality of work life has been widely discussed and defined over the years, with various interpretations (Sinval et al., 2019), as it is still an evolving concept. Despite the absence of a consensual approach, all definitions emphasize employee well-being and job satisfaction (Klein et al., 2019). In general terms, quality of work life refers to creating a favorable work environment that promotes employee satisfaction through development opportunities, job security, and adequate rewards. The concern goes beyond financial aspects, encompassing working conditions aimed at improving workers' overall satisfaction (Kulkarni, 2013).

In recent decades, interest in quality of work life has increased significantly, driven by transformations in the labor market and recognition of the role of family structure (Bagtasos, 2011). This concept gained traction in the 1970s when Walton (1973) suggested that quality of work life should encompass both working conditions and human and environmental values, often overlooked in favor of economic and technological growth. Since then, various approaches have emerged. Danna and Griffin (1999) presented a hierarchical view, positing that well-being at work depends on interrelated factors such as personal satisfaction, interpersonal relationships, and compensation, proposing that quality of work life should address both the organizational environment and employees' emotional needs.

In the 2000s, authors such as Limongi-França and Schirrmeister (2012) and Aquino and Fernandes (2013) reinforced the importance of well-being at work as a central element for organizational development and productivity. Fernandes (1996, cited in Klein et al., 2019) expanded this vision by defining quality of work life as an integrated management of physical, technological, and social aspects that strengthen the organizational climate and promote employee well-being.

Recent evidence suggests that quality of work life directly impacts employee satisfaction and performance while also reducing turnover intentions. For example, work-life balance contributes to reduced stress levels and strengthens commitment to the organization (Sirgy et al., 2001). Factors such as job security and recognition are essential for fostering employee engagement (Almalki et al., 2012), while a safe environment, coupled with managerial support, enhances performance and satisfaction, promoting a positive workplace climate and reducing turnover (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2014).

With technological advancement and growing competitiveness, many companies have been compelled to restructure operations to increase productivity. However, these changes have brought about negative consequences. These transformations often involve implementing new technologies, automating processes, and optimizing operations to boost efficiency and productivity. However, they have also increased the pressure to achieve results, frequently overburdening employees with heightened responsibilities and expectations. This leads to physical and psychological exhaustion, as employees face intensified workloads and stricter deadlines, positioning quality of work life as a crucial strategy to mitigate these adverse effects and promote employees' continuous well-being (Aketch et al., 2012; Campos, 2016; Demerouti et al., 2001).

Walton, (1973) proposed eight key dimensions to improve quality of work life: fair compensation, safe working conditions, opportunities to use and develop skills, growth and job security, social integration, constitutionalism at work (employee rights), work-life balance, and the social relevance of work. These dimensions aim not only to ensure employee satisfaction but also to create an environment conducive to personal and professional development, fostering loyalty and motivation. By improving these aspects, organizations can achieve greater employee commitment, leading to increased operational efficiency and overall success. Thus, quality of work life goes beyond basic working conditions, focusing on creating an environment where workers can thrive and actively contribute to the organization's success (Nanjundeswaraswamy & Swamy, 2013).

Subsequently, Armstrong and Taylor (2014) expanded the concept of quality of work life by incorporating behavioral and structural factors that directly influence employee experiences. They emphasize that supervision plays a crucial role, as leadership style and managerial support significantly impact employee motivation, performance, and well-being. Effective supervision fosters open communication, strengthens trust, and creates an environment where employees feel valued. Among the most relevant behavioral factors are a participative leadership style,

which engages employees, and open, transparent communication, which reduces misunderstandings and fosters a sense of belonging.

In addition to supervision, Armstrong and Taylor (2014) highlight the importance of organizational structure in enhancing quality of work life. Flexible organizations that encourage cross-departmental collaboration and facilitate communication tend to build a more positive and productive environment. This organizational model not only promotes efficiency but also contributes to a workplace climate that supports employee well-being.

In this context, leadership plays a crucial role in promoting workplace quality of life. According to Suriñach et al. (2008), the leadership style adopted directly influences employee engagement levels, impacting both their well-being and organizational efficiency. Furthermore, leadership plays a role beyond quality of work life, as it also directly relates to organizational performance. As Spector (1985) argues, satisfied employees tend to exhibit higher internal motivation, resulting in lower absenteeism rates and greater talent retention. Hackman and Oldham (1976) complement this perspective, stating that high job performance levels help reduce the impact of stress and workplace conflicts, promoting a more harmonious and productive work environment.

Leadership styles such as transformational leadership, discussed by Northouse, (2021) and authentic leadership, addressed by Yukl (2013), show that leaders who inspire, motivate, and promote authenticity create an atmosphere of trust and satisfaction among employees. Since these are also positive leadership styles, we can assume that responsible leadership will yield similar results, as these leadership styles, focused on employee well-being, have positive effects. Like transformational and authentic leadership, responsible leadership, by aligning ethical values with organizational practices, promotes higher motivation, talent retention, and a more balanced work environment, contributing to organizational success (Doh & Quigley, 2014; Tian & Suo, 2021).

According to Sirgy et al. (2001), workplace quality of life is closely related to the satisfaction of employees' physical, psychological, and social needs. Satisfying these needs is essential because, when workers feel safe, recognized, and have good working conditions, they tend to be healthier, more productive, and engaged. This results in higher motivation, lower stress levels, and a greater willingness to contribute positively to the work environment. Additionally, good quality of work life directly affects employees' personal lives, positively influencing their overall well-being (Sirgy et al., 2001).

This holistic approach recognizes that work experiences are not isolated; they affect other areas of life, such as work-life balance (Sirgy et al., 2001).

In the hospitality sector, quality of work life is essential, as employees face specific challenges such as long hours, constant pressure to satisfy guests, and high levels of emotional labor. These factors often increase stress and turnover intentions. Recent studies confirm that quality of work life is crucial for employee satisfaction, well-being, and retention, encompassing aspects such as fair compensation, interpersonal support, and professional development (Durão et al., 2024; Supina & Singh, 2024).

A study by Supina and Singh (2024) on the Indian hospitality context reveals that practices like fair compensation and a safe work environment are directly linked to employee commitment. However, they observed that implementing these practices remains limited, particularly regarding compensation, which was rated below expectations. The authors suggest that more equitable pay structures are needed to make compensation a motivating and retention factor. Additionally, they emphasize that quality of work life enhances productivity and fosters more positive interactions with colleagues and clients.

Another significant study by Durão et al. (2024) examines interpersonal relations and social support in the Portuguese hospitality sector. The research indicates that a robust support network, characterized by a positive organizational environment and supportive interpersonal relationships, is essential for employee satisfaction and retention. In a high-stress sector, strong work relationships help balance employees' emotional and psychological demands, fostering resilience and loyalty. Interpersonal support strengthens employees' sense of belonging, which is crucial for them to feel valued and motivated to stay with the company.

Lee et al. (2015) provides a theoretical perspective by applying Self-Determination Theory and Need Satisfaction Theory to understand the impact of quality of work life in hospitality. According to Self-Determination Theory, developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), individuals tend to be more motivated and satisfied when their psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. In hospitality, these needs are fulfilled when employees have some control over their tasks, opportunities to develop skills, and positive relationships with colleagues and managers. The study shows that practices like safe work environments and training programs enhance autonomy and competence, reducing dissatisfaction and turnover intentions (Lee et al., 2015).

Moreover, Need Satisfaction Theory by Ryan & Deci (2000) suggests that employees seek to have their economic, safety, and personal development needs met in the workplace. In the challenging hospitality industry, employees need to feel that their contributions are valued and that there is support for personal and professional growth. Thus, quality of work life practices

focused on recognition, safety, and advancement opportunities not only increase job satisfaction but also help retain valuable talent (Lee et al., 2015).

Investing in quality of work life means promoting not only satisfaction but also an organizational culture of support and appreciation. A workplace where employees feel safe, supported, and recognized improves service quality and directly contributes to organizational excellence. For the hospitality sector, investing in quality of work life is not merely an employee benefit but an essential strategy for long-term success (Lee et al., 2015; (Klein et al., 2019).

1.3. Well-being at Work

Work is not just a source of income, but it also plays a crucial role in individuals' well-being and personal fulfillment. Well-being at work can be defined as a state reflecting satisfaction with various aspects of the work environment, including emotional balance, physical health, social support, and personal growth within the (Danna & Griffin, Health and Well-Being in the Workplace: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature, 1999). This concept encompasses both physical and emotional dimensions, and its promotion is essential to ensure that employees can reach their full potential in the workplace (Dessen & Paz, 2010). When individuals feel satisfied and fulfilled at work, they not only improve their quality of life but also contribute directly to the organization's success by creating a more productive and healthier work environment (Dessen & Paz, 2010).

In the hospitality sector, where emotional demands and constant customer interaction are essential aspects of the role, employee well-being becomes a decisive factor for business performance. Employee satisfaction has a direct impact on service levels, influencing the quality perceived by customers and, consequently, the organization's competitiveness in the market (Karatepe, 2010). Several studies show that effective management of employee well-being in the workplace brings significant returns for companies, including increased productivity, loyalty, and reduced turnover intention (Oliveira et al., 2021).

Moreover, by fostering an environment that promotes satisfaction and personal fulfillment, organizations benefit from more engaged and committed employees. In the hospitality sector, this translates into improvements in operational performance and a positive impact on financial results. There are several dimensions that influence well-being at work, such as the physical environment, organizational culture, interpersonal relationships, growth opportunities, and work-life balance (Dessen & Paz, 2010).

These dimensions become even more relevant in the hospitality sector due to the demanding nature of the work. Karatepe (2010) highlights that role-related stress and emotional

exhaustion are critical challenges faced by frontline employees. However, supervisor support can mitigate these effects, increasing job satisfaction and reducing emotional exhaustion, which contributes to talent retention (Karatepe, 2010).

To address the unique challenges of the hospitality sector, many companies implement specific practices to promote employee well-being. Emotional support programs, such as counseling sessions and mindfulness initiatives, help to alleviate stress and enhance mental health (Chen & Lin, 2015). Flexible schedules and scheduled breaks are essential, providing a better balance between personal life and work, which, in turn, reduces turnover intentions (Deery & Jago, 2009). Furthermore, both financial and public recognition strengthen employees' connection to the company, fostering a sense of belonging and continuous motivation, which also helps to reduce turnover and increase long-term commitment (Karatepe & Karadas, 2012; Danish & Usman, 2010).

In addition to recognition, continuous training and career development opportunities are essential for employee well-being in the hospitality sector. Oliveira et al. (2021) emphasize that offering training programs that enhance employees' skills not only promotes professional development but also boosts confidence and job satisfaction.

These initiatives convey to employees that they are valued and have a promising future within the organization, which enhances their confidence and is reflected in the quality of service they provide to customers. Employees who feel more prepared and secure are better equipped to face challenges and deliver higher quality service (Oliveira et al., 2021).

Lastly, responsible leadership is essential for fostering a healthy work environment in the hospitality sector. Maak & Pless, (2005) argue that responsible leaders create an environment where employees feel valued and supported, which is crucial for talent retention in demanding environments such as hospitality (Kandasamy & Ancheri, 2009; Ling et al., 2011). By promoting employee well-being, responsible leaders reduce stress and increase satisfaction, contributing to a more productive and sustainable work environment.

Thus, investing in employee well-being in the hospitality sector is more than an ethical obligation, it is a smart business strategy. Employees who feel valued and supported are more likely to commit to the company and stay longer (Dessen & Paz, 2010; Moretti, 2003), resulting in lower turnover rates, higher service quality, and, consequently, greater business success (Oliveira et al., 2021). As Moretti (2003) states, investing in employee well-being is ultimately an investment in the organization's progress and the construction of a more humane and sustainable society.

1.4. Turnover Intention

Organizations in the hospitality sector face unique challenges due to the customer service-intensive nature of the industry and the need to maintain high standards of quality. This sector, which is undergoing constant technological evolution and experiencing a significant increase in the racial and ethnic diversity of its workforce, is also dealing with growing organizational competitiveness. These dynamics create a high demand for both qualitative and quantitative worker skills (Baum, 2008).

The qualitative demand in the hospitality sector refers to the need for employees with specialized skills, such as fluency in multiple languages, advanced interpersonal abilities, and technical expertise to handle emerging technologies in customer service. For instance, hotel managers must be capable of leading diverse teams and promoting an excellent guest experience. On the other hand, the quantitative demand relates to the number of employees required to meet daily operational needs, especially during peak seasons, when there is an increased demand for labor. The seasonal nature of the hospitality industry makes this particularly critical, as demand spikes often require the rapid hiring of large numbers of workers. However, the sector is facing a decline in the availability of qualified and affordable labor, exacerbating recruitment and retention challenges (Calo, 2008).

Turnover is a common phenomenon in hospitality, defined by the process of new workers entering and others leaving the organization, while turnover intention refers to employees' desire or willingness to leave the company (Price, 1997). Turnover often results from job dissatisfaction, long working hours, and the seasonal nature of the industry. These conditions place significant demands on employees, particularly during peak periods, which can lead to emotional and professional exhaustion. The direct consequence of turnover in the hospitality sector is the ongoing need for recruitment and training, which generates high costs and impacts the quality of services provided (Davidson et al., 2010). Moreover, turnover negatively affects productivity and the morale of the remaining employees, which in turn impacts on the guest experience. When experienced employees leave, the remaining staff are often overburdened, leading to demotivation. This pressure can contribute to a turnover cycle, where the additional workload leads to more departures, further compromising team performance and guest satisfaction (Fleischmann et al., 2013).

There are two main perspectives for analyzing the causes of turnover: individual and organizational. The individual perspective considers factors such as job dissatisfaction, lack of growth opportunities, and interpersonal conflicts, which are often exacerbated by the constant pressure in the hospitality work environment (Bartunek et al., 2008). In hospitality, these issues

are amplified by the stress of direct customer contact and the demands of working irregular hours, often leading to burnout (Davidson et al., 2010).

The organizational perspective, on the other hand, analyzes how organizational culture, human resource policies, and work climate influence retention. To fully understand turnover, it is necessary to explore the various theories that have been developed over the past few decades. The concept of turnover has evolved, beginning with simple predictive and preventive models, such as that of March and Simon (1958), which suggested that employees who are satisfied and have few employment alternatives are more likely to stay. In the 1970s, Mobley (1977) introduced a sequential model, describing the exit process in nine phases, from dissatisfaction to actual departure, highlighting that turnover is a gradual process, not a sudden event. At the same time, Price (1977) focused on the structural reasons that lead to turnover, such as pay and communication, arguing that job satisfaction is a key factor in the decision to leave.

In the following years, studies advanced with more complex theories, such as the Lee and Mitchell (1994) model, which incorporated external shocks as triggers for departure, and the theories of Maertz and Griffeth (2004), which combined affective and cognitive factors to explain turnover. More recently, Hom et al. (2017) revisited the literature, emphasizing the importance of integrating contextual and individual factors to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of turnover, as the decision to leave is influenced by multiple motivational and contextual forces. Including not only job satisfaction, but also the perception of alternatives, embeddedness in the environment, and the presence of critical events or "shocks." In a sector marked by long working hours and emotional demands, job satisfaction is crucial, and the lack of recognition and challenging working conditions increase the desire to leave. The perception of alternatives, such as new opportunities at other hotel chains, also encourages turnover, especially in areas where such positions are abundant. (Hom et al., 2017).

Shocks play an important role in this context, as events that lead employees to reconsider their connection with the organization. These shocks can be positive, such as an unexpected job offer from another organization, for example, a job proposal from a competing company with better financial conditions or growth opportunities; or negative, such as a management change that reduces benefits. An example of this is a change in management leading to benefit cuts, such as bonuses, vacation days, or health plans, which can generate dissatisfaction. There are also personal shocks, such as plans to relocate, and impulsive shocks, arising from immediate conflicts in the workplace that lead to abrupt decisions to leave. These impulsive and emotional shocks are particularly common in the hotel sector, where conflicts with supervisors,

colleagues, or even clients can generate frustration and result in a sudden departure. Such exits often respond to an episode of stress or perceived injustice, typical of a high-pressure work environment like hospitality. (Bartunek et al., 2008; Davidson et al., 2010; Hom et al., 2017). Given these complexities, organizations are exploring targeted strategies to address turnover issues.

For example, Solnet et al. (2015) suggest that an organizational culture valuing employee well-being and frequent recognition fosters a more engaging and satisfying work environment. Hospitality chains that consistently implement recognition and feedback practices find that employees feel more valued and are more inclined to commit to organizational goals, thereby fostering stronger loyalty (Davidson et al., 2010).

Additionally, Davidson et al. (2010) emphasize that appropriate compensation, along with supplementary benefits, reinforces financial stability and commitment. Benefits such as health plans, performance bonuses, and rewards for years of service are essential in providing a sense of security that goes beyond salary, strengthening the employee's bond with the organization.

Finally, one of the most effective strategies for retention is the development of work-life balance (WLB) policies, especially in a demanding sector such as hospitality. Deery (2008) proposes a retention model that highlights the importance of these practices in high-emotional-demand environments, allowing employees greater control over their routines through flexible hours and emotional support, such as counseling and stress management. These practices not only promote employee well-being but also enhance organizational performance, making companies more attractive and reducing turnover costs (Deery & Jago, 2015).

1.5. Hypothesis and Research Model

1.6. The Relationship between responsible Leadership and turnover intention

Employee turnover is a persistent challenge in the hospitality sector, where long working hours and high emotional demands often lead to stress and burnout. The literature reveals that job satisfaction, and the perception of a supportive work environment play a key role in retaining employees. Hackman & Oldham (1976) argue that effective job performance can mitigate the impact of workplace stress and conflict, fostering a more positive work environment and reducing turnover intention. In this context, responsible leadership, which balances financial outcomes with employee well-being, becomes particularly relevant. Leaders who provide adequate support and promote a culture of care and respect can help alleviate emotional strain, thereby reducing employees' desire to seek other opportunities (Doh &

Quigley, 2014; Tian & Suo, 2021). While there may be some positive outcomes associated with employee departures, such as the creation of internal promotion opportunities, turnover in the hospitality sector tends to be predominantly detrimental. The redistribution of workload among remaining employees increases pressure and can reduce job satisfaction, which often leads to further departures (Fleischmann et al., 2013). To break this cycle of turnover, responsible leadership becomes a central strategy, ensuring a healthy work environment and promoting talent retention.

The implementation of responsible leadership practices can mitigate the negative effects of turnover, both direct and indirect, by creating an environment of trust, recognition, and support for professional development. Direct financial costs, such as recruitment and training of new employees, are substantial; however, indirect impacts also affect the productivity and satisfaction of remaining employees, ultimately compromising the quality of customer experience (Gill, 2008). Thus, responsible leadership is not merely a tool for mitigating turnover but an essential strategy for ensuring sustainability and success in the hospitality sector.

Psychological theories, such as Bandura's Social Learning Theory, provide valuable insights into how leadership influences talent retention. According to Bandura (2001), employees are strongly influenced by their social interactions and perceptions of their leaders. When employees feel valued and connected to the organization, they develop a sense of belonging that reduces their likelihood of seeking new job opportunities. In this context, responsible leadership plays a fundamental role in creating a supportive and collaborative environment, which not only encourages positive employee behavior but also reinforces a culture of respect and trust within the organization (Haque et al., 2017). Responsible leadership is not merely a tool for mitigating the negative effects of turnover; rather, it is an essential strategy for ensuring sustainability and success in the hospitality sector (Gill, 2008).

Therefore, it is hypothesized that responsible leadership will be negatively associated with turnover intention, as it promotes a healthier, more sustainable work environment.

The following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Responsible leadership is negatively associated with turnover intention.

1.7. Mediating role of quality of work life on the relationship responsible leadership and turnover intention

Quality of work life is a critical factor influencing employee retention, particularly in high-pressure environments like the hospitality sector. Employees who are satisfied with their working conditions tend to remain with the organization, while those facing high levels of stress and dissatisfaction are more likely to seek new opportunities. As Hackman & Oldham (1976) suggest, job performance can mitigate conflicts and overload, fostering a more positive perception of the work environment and reducing turnover intention. In this context, responsible leadership plays a vital role in enhancing quality of work life by promoting fair working conditions, work-life balance, and a supportive environment. When employees perceive that their leaders care about their well-being, they are more likely to experience higher quality of work life, which in turn reduces their turnover intention (Doh & Quigley, 2014). Responsible leadership, by integrating ethical and social values, can mitigate these challenges by promoting a balanced and sustainable work environment that fosters talent retention and reduces stress and burnout (Tian & Suo, 2021; Doh & Quigley, 2014).

This is where quality of work life acts as a mediator in the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention, as it is through the positive impact on quality of work life that responsible leadership influences employees' intentions to remain with the organization. In other words, responsible leadership enhances quality of work life by creating a work environment where employees feel supported and valued, which increases their satisfaction and well-being. Consequently, this satisfaction reduces turnover intention, as employees who perceive their working conditions as fair and favorable are less likely to seek external alternatives (Lee & Madera, 2019; Wright & Bonett, 2007). Thus, quality of work life mediates the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention by acting as a conduit through which responsible leadership impacts employees' decisions to stay or leave the organization. In this way, responsible leadership is not only a mitigating factor for turnover intention but also an essential strategy for fostering a healthy and sustainable work environment that strengthens talent retention (Tian & Suo, 2021; Doh & Quigley, 2014).

Responsible leadership emerges as an effective solution to address the challenges of the hospitality sector, especially regarding turnover and employee well-being. By incorporating ethical and social values into organizational practices, this leadership style promotes pro-environmental behaviors and aligns employees with the company's sustainability goals (Tian & Suo, 2021).

This leads us to the following hypothesis:

H2: Quality of work life mediates the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention.

1.8. Mediating role of well-being on the relationship responsible leadership and turnover intention

Employees' well-being is becoming a central topic in research, especially in the hospitality sector, considering the pressures and context that this sector has (He et al., 2019).

Literature has found a positive relationship between responsible leadership and the wellbeing of the employees. In other words, such leaders, who care for their employees as individuals outside their work, build strong interpersonal relationships, and assist subordinates or any of their supporters (Gordon et al., 2019; He et al., 2019), strengthen the sense of belonging and the encouragement of culture. It helps working employees feel appreciated and insured, and psychologically, there would be more chances of positive work experience and improvement of mental health (Kelloway et al., 2013; Maak & Pless, 2005).

Research developed by He et al. (2019), found that responsible leadership has a positive impact on employee well-being on the hospitality sector, highlight that by being attentive to the employees and focus on their goals, ideas, and needs, they will be more engage to have a higher performance (He et al., 2019).

A worker's well-being has been found as a negative predictor of turnover intentions, meaning that when the workers well-being is taken into account, they are less likely to leave the company (Wright & Bonett, 2007).

Well-being acts as an essential channel in the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention, creating a link that integrates care for the employee and their retention within the organization. Responsible leadership, by prioritizing well-being and demonstrating a genuine commitment to employees' needs, fosters an environment of emotional and psychological support (Avolio et al., 2009; Maak & Pless, 2006). This environment, by strengthening employees' mental health and satisfaction, reduces stress and exhaustion, facilitating retention. Research shows that employees experiencing high levels of well-being have a lower intention to seek new opportunities, as they feel valued and supported within the organizational context (Luthans et al., 2017; Wright & Bonett, 2007).

This leads us to the following hypothesis:

H3: Employee well-being mediated the relationship between responsible leadership and employee turnover intentions.

1.9. Mediating sequential role of quality of work life and well-being on the relationship responsible leadership and turnover intention

When examined collectively, responsible leadership, quality of work life, and well-being are essential in reducing turnover intention in the hospitality sector. Responsible leadership, by prioritizing employee well-being and individual needs, builds a foundation of mutual support and respect, thus fostering organizational commitment (Gordon et al., 2019). This human-centered approach enhances quality of work life by creating a healthy and appreciative work environment where employees feel their contributions are valued and their conditions respected (Aketch et al., 2012).

Quality of work life, directly influenced by responsible leadership, positively impacts employees' well-being, contributing to a harmonious and low-stress organizational environment, which, in turn, leads to reduced conflict and higher talent retention. In the hospitality context, where demands are intense, this combination of responsible leadership, quality of work life, and well-being becomes essential in ensuring that employees feel satisfied and less inclined to seek alternatives in the job market (Maak, 2007; Wright & Bonett, 2007).

Additionally, by fostering a culture of development and recognition, responsible leadership instills in employees a sense of value and motivation to remain with the organization. Recognizing their efforts and offering clear pathways for career progression strengthens organizational commitment, which, in turn, establishes a culture of trust and motivation crucial for talent retention (Voegtlin et al., 2015).

H4: The relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention is sequentially mediated by the quality of work life and well-being at work.

Considering the suggested hypotheses, a correlational study will be carried out to test the research model set out in Figure 1.1. The methodology used will be described in the following chapter:

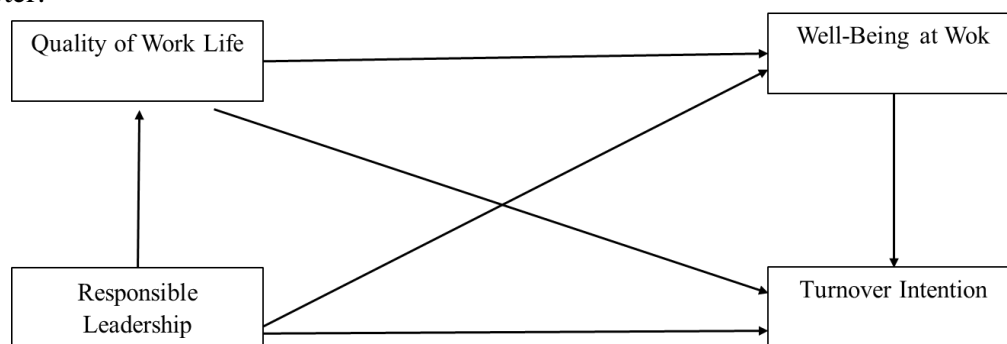


Figure 1.1 - Research Model

Chapter II - Method

2.1 Procedure

The present study adopted a quantitative approach through a cross-sectional correlational design, analyzing and establishing relationships between variables. To conduct the study, an electronic questionnaire was developed using the Qualtrics platform, incorporating scales previously used in other studies, thereby ensuring the adaptation of these measures to the Portuguese language. It is important to note that, to avoid common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2024) particularly the effects of using a single source to collect data on the study variables, a marker variable (e.g., Preference for solitary work) and the Social Desirability variable were included in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was distributed electronically using informal channels (i.e., Facebook, Instagram). Participants were presented with an informed consent form during the survey, which included the option to withdraw at any time, as well as assurances of anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The selection criteria for this survey were as follows: participants had to be at least 18 years old and have worked with the same supervisor for at least three months in the hospitality sector.

The data collection period lasted approximately one month, during which 552 responses were collected. However, 285 participants were excluded from the data analysis for not meeting the selection criteria, which required participants to work in the hotel industry and to have worked directly with their supervisor for at least 3 months, or for failing to complete the questionnaire in its entirety, resulting in a final sample of 267 participants.

2.2 Participants

The sample for this study consists of 267 participants, aged between 19 and 59 years ($M = 29.03$; $SD = 8.017$), reflecting age diversity among the workers. The sample is predominantly female, with women comprising 53.6% of the participants (143 women), 43.4% of respondents being male (116 participants), while 2.2% identify as non-binary, and 0.7% preferred not to disclose their gender.

The respondents exhibit a high level of education ($M = 2.60$; $SD = .83$), with 44.2% of the participants holding a bachelor's degree, and an equal percentage having completed secondary education. A smaller proportion of participants hold a master's degree (4.9%) or a doctoral degree (1.9%).

The participants' tenure at their companies varies significantly, ranging from 3 months to 37 years ($M = 3.65$; $SD = 4.36$), indicating substantial variation in length of service.

The length of time participants have worked with their direct supervisor also shows considerable variation ($M = 3.01$; $SD = 3.4$). Most respondents (14.6%) indicated they had worked with the same supervisor for 3 months, while others reported longer durations, including a small number who have worked with the same supervisor for 30 years or more.

In terms of frequency of interaction with their supervisor ($M = 1.68$; $SD = .76$), 47.6% of workers report daily interactions, while 40.1% report weekly interactions. A smaller percentage (9.4%) interact biweekly, and only 3% have monthly interactions with their supervisor.

Most participants (49.1%) work in medium-sized companies (50 to 250 employees), 32.2% are employed in small companies (10 to 49 employees), 10.1% work in large companies (over 250 employees), and 8.6% of participants are employed in micro-enterprises (with up to 9 employees).

Most participants (85.8%) are employed full-time, while 14.2% have part-time work arrangements.

Finally, in terms of contractual status ($M = 1.54$; $SD = .63$), most participants (52.4%) have permanent contracts, suggesting considerable job stability. 41.6% of workers are on fixed-term contracts, while 5.2% are employed under temporary or outsourcing arrangements, and 0.7% are interns, reflecting the inclusion of early-career workers.

| | Participants |
|--|--------------|
| N | 267 |
| % Women | 53.6% |
| Average Age (years) | 29.03 |
| Standard Deviation (SD) of Age | 8.017 |
| Average Length of Employment (years) | 3.65 |
| Standard Deviation (SD) of Length of Employment (years) | 4.36 |
| % Full-Time Workers | 85.8% |
| % Permanent Contract | 52.4% |
| Average Length of Working with Direct Supervisor (years) | 3.01 |
| Standard Deviation (SD) of Length with Supervisor (years) | 3.41 |
| % Daily Interaction with Supervisor | 47.6% |
| % Bachelor's Degree | 44.2% |
| % High School Education | 44.2% |
| % Workers in Medium-sized Companies (50-250 employees) | 49.1% |
| % Workers in Small Companies (10-49 employees) | 32.2% |

Figure 2.1- Summary of Sociodemographic and Professional Characteristics of the Sample

Some insights into the hierarchical position of the evaluated leaders in this study were obtained through a subscale of the responsible leadership measure proposed by Voegtlin (2011). This measure includes an initial section where participants respond to 10 items aimed at contextualizing them about the concept of stakeholders and assessing how frequently their leaders interact with these groups. The response scale used is a five-point Likert scale (1 = not at all; 5 = frequently, if not always). Based on these responses, it is possible to infer the leadership style with which participants interact, considering the sample's overall averages. Thus, the results reflect employees' evaluation of their leaders' interaction with different stakeholders.

Leaders interact "quite frequently" with customers ($M = 3.25$; $SD = 1.21$) and even more frequently with employees ($M = 3.66$; $SD = 1.05$), suggesting constant and regular contact with these groups.

However, interactions with members of partner entities or alliances ($M = 2.75$; $SD = 1.28$) and representatives of the local community ($M = 2.36$; $SD = 1.18$) are less frequent and more sporadic. A similar situation was observed in interactions with unions ($M = 2.36$; $SD = 1.26$) and NGOs ($M = 2.23$; $SD = 1.17$), which occur rarely.

Interactions with owners or shareholders ($M = 2.64$; $SD = 1.38$) and government institutions ($M = 2.42$; $SD = 1.31$) occur moderately and vary depending on the organization. On the other hand, contact with suppliers ($M = 3.18$; $SD = 1.21$) is more common, indicating a moderate frequency of interaction.

Finally, interactions with top management ($M = 3.45$; $SD = 1.05$) are relatively frequent, indicating regular and important contact for organizational alignment.

Interactions with government institutions or regulatory entities were sporadic ($M = 2.42$; $SD = 1.31$), and the variations in responses can be attributed to differences in sectors or the need for regulatory compliance.

2.3 Instruments

The questionnaire used in this study begins with a brief introduction outlining its objectives and an informed consent form (Appendix A). It includes questions addressing the variables incorporated in the research model previously described, along with a marker variable and a scale to measure social desirability. At the end, the questionnaire presents several sociodemographic questions aimed at better characterizing the participants' profiles, followed

by a debriefing that clarifies the objectives of the study, the academic goals, and provides additional resources on the topic of responsible leadership.

To ensure the reliability of the measures used, an internal consistency test was conducted by calculating Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α). According to the criteria of Gomes and Cesário (2014), the Cronbach's alpha value should not be lower than 0.60, as this is the minimum acceptable threshold. Any value below this point is considered inadequate for further statistical analysis.

It is important to note that values between 0.60 and 0.70 indicate weak internal consistency, while values between 0.70 and 0.80 are considered reasonable. When Cronbach's alpha ranges between 0.80 and 0.90, the consistency is classified as good, and values above 0.90 indicate very high reliability (Gomes & Cesário, 2014).

Responsible Leadership (Predictor Variable)

In the analysis of responsible leadership, the measure developed by Voegtlin (2011) was adopted, with an adaptation for the Portuguese population performed by Neves (2018). This measure consists of 15 items distributed across two distinct subscales. The first subscale, composed of 10 items, aims to contextualize participants regarding the notion of stakeholders and assess how frequently the leadership interacts with these groups. The second subscale focuses on leadership behaviors, evaluating how the leader handles stakeholder relations, with 5 items such as "Attempts to reach a consensus among affected stakeholders." The response scale for both parts is a five-point Likert scale (1 = Not at all; 5 = Frequently, if not always).

The first part of the scale demonstrates an internal consistency value of 0.80, while the second part, which addresses leadership behaviors, shows an internal consistency value of 0.76. It is this latter subscale that will be used to test the research hypotheses (Appendix B).

Quality of Work Life (Mediator Variable 1)

To assess the quality of work life, the scale originally developed by Sirgy et al. (2001) was used, which was validated for the Portuguese context by Sinval et al. (2019). This instrument consists of 16 items, distributed across seven dimensions that represent individual needs. Three items correspond to health and safety needs (e.g., "I feel physically safe at work"; $\alpha = 0.64$), three to economic and family needs (e.g., "I am satisfied with the salary I receive for my work"; $\alpha = 0.48$), two to social needs (e.g., "I have good friends at work"; $r = 0.21$), two to recognition needs (e.g., "I feel recognized for my work in this organization"; $r = 0.37$), two to self-actualization needs (e.g., "I feel that my job allows me to fulfill my full potential"; $r = 0.53$),

two to knowledge needs (e.g., "I feel I am constantly learning new things that improve my work"; $r = 0.60$), and, finally, two items corresponding to creativity needs (e.g., "My job involves a lot of creativity"; $r = 0.62$). This measure uses a seven-point Likert response scale from 1 (Completely False) to 7 (Completely True). To create an overall indicator, the dimensions can be aggregated (Sirgy et al., 2001). The scale presents Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, indicating high reliability.

Affective Well-being (Mediator Variable 2)

To measure affective well-being, the scale developed by Warr, (1994) was used, which the author introduced in the work context. This scale consists of 12 items representing positive and negative emotional states, characterized by different levels of activation, including terms such as "tense," "comfortable," "anxious," and "motivated." These emotional states are measured using a scale from 1 ("Never") to 6 ("All the time"). The Cronbach's alpha for these items is 0.71, indicating good internal consistency for the scale.

Turnover Intention (Criterion Variable)

To assess turnover intention, the scale developed by Camman et al. (1979), as adapted by Chen et al. (1998), was employed. This measure consists of three items, exemplified by statements such as "It is quite likely that I will look for a new job within the next year." Participants indicated their level of agreement using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). The analysis revealed Cronbach's alpha of 0.67, indicating a lower but still acceptable level of internal consistency for the scale.

Preference for Solitary Work (Marker Variable)

In addition to the variables included in the research model, an external variable was added to assess the potential presence of common method variance, which can occur when data are collected from a single source in a single moment in time. To control for this effect, the marker variable Preference for Solitary Work was included, developed by Ramamoorthy and Flood (2004) and adapted into Portuguese by Pimenta (2020). This variable was chosen because it is cognitively, but not theoretically, associated with work in general, and it has no direct relationship with the main variables of the model, such as responsible leadership and turnover intention. (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Following methodological recommendations, several steps were taken, such as using different response scales, separating the timing of measures, and carefully wording the items to avoid ambiguity. The scale used to measure Preference for Solitary Work consists of three items (e.g., "If I could choose, I would prefer to work alone"), with responses based on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). Cronbach's alpha of .60, indicating a lower level of internal consistency.

Social Desirability (Covariate)

The Social Desirability Scale measures individuals' tendency to respond in ways that appear socially acceptable. This scale, based on Marlowe e Crowne (1960) work, includes items challenging respondents to admit morally questionable behaviors, such as "There have been times when I took advantage of someone" or "Sometimes I try to get back at others instead of forgiving and forgetting," with responses based on a four-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 4 = Strongly Agree).

It is used to assess individual's tendency provide responses influenced by the desire for social conformity and not genuine ones. The scale is widely employed to ensure that results reflect actual attitudes rather than attempts to appear socially acceptable. The results from the Social Desirability Scale showed very low reliability, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.30 for three items but the item "I have never been bothered when people expressed ideas very different from mine" presented a negative correlation and reduced the internal consistency of the scale, indicating that the item was measuring a concept different from the other items. Its exclusion helps to ensure that the scale accurately measures the construct of Social Desirability. After removing this item, the Cronbach's alpha for the remaining two items increased to 0.65, reflecting an acceptable level of internal consistency.

Sociodemographic Characteristics

To characterize the study sample, questions were asked regarding: gender, education level, age, tenure within the organization, tenure of the relationship with the supervisor, contractual status, whether the participant holds a leadership position, and, finally, the work sector of the organization.

2.4 Analysis of Common Method Bias / Single Source Bias

Based on the results obtained from the analysis of the variables within the model, the marker variable “Preference for Solitary Work” showed a significant correlation with several key variables in the organizational context.

Specifically, a negative correlation was observed between the marker and responsible ($\rho = 0.09$; $p = 0.13$), quality of work life ($\rho = 0.04$; $p = 0.46$) and well-being at work ($\rho = 0.17$; $p = 0.004$), while a negative but insignificant correlation was found with turnover intention ($\rho = -0.05$; $p = 0.37$). These results indicate that the marker variable does not strongly influence the main variables of the study.

Despite these significant correlations, particularly between responsible leadership and quality of work life, the correlation values are considered weak to moderate. This implies that while statistically significant relationships exist, they are not strong enough to rule out the possibility of common method bias. As suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003), common method bias may influence the results and should be a concern when interpreting the observed correlations.

To assess the degree of common method bias, the Harman’s Test (Podsakoff et al., 2024) was conducted, which involves an exploratory factor analysis without rotation. The purpose of this test is to determine if a single factor can explain more than 50% of the variance among the variables. If this were the case, it would indicate common method bias. In the present analysis, the first factor explained 24,67 % of the total variance, well below the critical threshold of 50%. This result is reassuring, as it suggests that common method variance is not significantly present in the analyzed data. Fuller et al. (2016) recommend that values below 70% be considered satisfactory, reinforcing that the first factor identified is not sufficient to invalidate the results.

However, it is important to note that Harman’s Test has been subject to criticism in academic literature. Some authors argue that the technique may be insensitive to small bias effects and, in some cases, may even produce false positives. Considering this, other authors have proposed various a priori and post hoc solutions. Among these, the use of social desirability measures is highlighted, as they help reduce the influence of biased responses from participants, as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003).

Despite the precautions taken, it is not possible to completely rule out the presence of common method variance, which may unexpectedly influence the results. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution, acknowledging that there may be some influence of common method bias (Hulland et al., 2017; Tehseen et al., 2017). This should be considered

in the overall interpretation of the results and in the development of future strategies to mitigate this type of bias.

Chapter III – Results

In this chapter, the previously mentioned research hypotheses will be analyzed. The statistical data were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 29, for correlation analysis and descriptive statistics, and the Process macro, version 4.3 (Hayes, 2017) for mediation model analysis.

3.1 Descriptive Analysis of Variables and Inter-Correlations

Considering the descriptive and correlational statistics presented in figure 3.1, it is possible to observe that responsible leadership shows values slightly above the midpoint of the response scale ($M = 3.03$; $SD = 0.76$), suggesting that employees perceive leadership as moderately responsible. This value indicates a positive perception, though not exceptionally high, of leadership within the organization.

Regarding quality of work life, it presents an average above the midpoint of the response scale ($M = 4.06$; $SD = 0.97$), suggesting a positive evaluation by employees of the working conditions and organizational environment. This value consistently exceeds the midpoint of the scale, reflecting positive and homogeneous perceptions, as indicated by the low standard deviation.

Well-being at work shows an average close to the midpoint of the scale ($M = 3.60$; $SD = 0.66$), suggesting a neutral to slightly positive perception of employees' well-being. There is moderate variation in responses, indicating that well-being perceptions may fluctuate depending on individual circumstances and the work environment.

Finally, turnover intention, with an average of ($M = 3.04$; $SD = 0.89$), suggests a slight tendency among employees not to want to leave the organization. This value, slightly below the midpoint of the scale, indicates that although some employees may consider leaving, the majority do not have immediate plans to seek new job opportunities.

To verify whether the responses were significantly different from the midpoint of the scale, a complementary analysis was performed using a one-sample t-test. Responsible leadership was found to be slightly above the scale's midpoint ($p < .001$; $CI = 2.94$; 3.13). Regarding quality of work life, the results indicate a positive evaluation, also situated above the scale's midpoint ($p < .001$; $CI = 3.95$; 4.18). Well-being at work was also above the midpoint ($p < .001$; $CI = 3.22$; 3.40), reflecting slightly positive perceptions from employees. As for turnover intention, it was slightly below the midpoint of the response scale ($p < .001$; $CI = 2.94$; 3.16), suggesting that most employees do not have immediate plans to leave the organization.

To analyze correlations between variables, Spearman's correlation coefficient was used, as some variables may not follow a normal distribution. This coefficient allowed us to calculate the relationship between variables and determine whether the association is positive or negative, as well as its significance, depending on proximity to 1 or -1, respectively. Additionally, it also indicates whether the relationship is statistically significant or not (Schober et al., 2018).

When analyzing the correlations, it is possible to observe that responsible leadership is positively related to quality of work life ($\rho = .56; p < .01$), meaning that as levels of responsible leadership increase, employees' perceptions of quality of work life also improve. Similarly, responsible leadership is negatively related to turnover intention ($\rho = -.40; p < .01$), suggesting that as levels of responsible leadership rise, employees' intentions to leave the organization decrease.

Quality of work life shows a significant negative correlation with turnover intention ($\rho = -.56; p < .01$), indicating that the higher the perceived quality of work life, the lower the turnover intention. Furthermore, well-being at work is positively related to quality of work life ($\rho = 0.55; p < 0.001$), suggesting that as perceptions of quality of work life improve, employees' levels of well-being also tend to increase.

The relationship between well-being at work and turnover intention presents a significant negative correlation ($\rho = -0.56; p < 0.001$), indicating that higher levels of well-being at work are associated with a lower turnover intention. This result suggests that an increase in well-being within the work environment may help reduce employees' intentions to leave the organization.

Regarding sociodemographic variables (i.e., satisfaction with work hours, leadership role, and employment status), satisfaction with work hours exhibited a significant negative correlation with turnover intention ($\rho = -0.50, p < 0.001$). This suggests that the more satisfied employees are with their work hours, the less likely they are to consider leaving the organization. Another variable with a significant correlation was holding a leadership role, which showed a positive correlation with turnover intention ($\rho = 0.27, p < 0.001$). This indicates that employees in leadership positions tend to have a higher intention to leave the company, possibly due to the increased responsibilities and pressures associated with the role.

Finally, employment status also demonstrated a positive correlation with turnover intention ($\rho = 0.17, p = 0.005$), suggesting that employees with less stable contracts, such as temporary or part-time, are more likely to consider leaving the organization compared to those with permanent contracts.

The remaining sociodemographic variables did not show a statistically significant correlation with any of the criterion variables and, therefore, will be excluded from further analysis.

| Variables | M | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|------|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------|---------|--------|---|
| 1. Responsible Leadership | 3.03 | 0.76 | (.76) | | | | | | | |
| 2. Quality of Work Life | 4.06 | 0.97 | 0,56** | (.87) | | | | | | |
| 3. Turnover Intention | 3.04 | 0.89 | -0.40** | -0.56** | (.67) | | | | | |
| 4. Well-being | 3.60 | 0.66 | 0.47** | 0.55** | -0.56** | (.71) | | | | |
| 5. Preference for Solitary Work | 3.51 | 0.82 | 0.02 | 0.04 | -0.01 | 0,11 | (.60) | | | |
| 6. Satisfaction with Work Schedule | 2.63 | 0.94 | 0.41** | 0.52** | -0.50** | 0.43** | -0.04 | | | |
| 7. Contractual Situation | - | - | -0.04 | -0.13* | 0.17** | -0.16** | -0.01 | -0.29** | | |
| 8. Leadership Role (0=Yes, 1=No) | - | - | -0.07 | -0.12* | 0.27** | -0.11 | 0.12 | -0.16* | 0.32** | |

Figure 3.1– Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations among Variables, and Internal Consistencies

Notes: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients in parenth

3.2 Testing the Research Model

To test the previously presented hypotheses certain assumptions were verified to ensure the validity of these tests. These assumptions include the independence and normality of errors, homoscedasticity of errors, absence of multicollinearity, and residual random variables with an expected value of zero. Only when these assumptions are met can a linear regression model be applied.

The Process model four was employed, as it is used for mediation analysis (Hayes, 2017). It is important to highlight that the analyses followed the argument presented by Hayes (2009) and Preacher and Hayes (2008), which suggests that a mediating effect can occur even in the absence of a significant total effect. Thus, even if there is no relationship between the predictor variable and the criterion variable (i.e., the total effect), an indirect effect via the mediator may still be present.

Furthermore, satisfaction with working hours, employment status, and holding a managerial position were included in the analysis as covariates. Additionally, the marker variable, preference for individual work, was included as a covariate due to its significant relationship with the variables present in the model under analysis.

3.2.1 The Relationship between responsible Leadership and turnover intention

Regarding the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention, the results of the analysis indicate that the total effect, meaning the direct effect that responsible leadership has on turnover intention without accounting for other variables, is negative and significant ($B = -0.22$, $t = -3.45$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that as perceptions of responsible leadership increase, turnover intention decreases among employees. Based on these results, it is possible to corroborate the first hypothesis H1, which posits that responsible leadership is negatively related to turnover intention.

3.2.2 Mediating role of quality of work life on the relationship responsible leadership and turnover intention

Regarding the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention in the mediated model, the results indicate that responsible leadership has a significant and negative effect on turnover intention ($B = -0.424$, $t = -6.631$, $p < 0.001$), which collaborates our first hypothesis regarding the direct effect.

Regarding our second hypothesis, is possible to verify that responsible leadership predicts positively and significantly quality of work life ($B = 0.814$, $t = 13.641$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, it is possible to verify that quality of work life has a negative and significant relationship with turnover intentions ($B = -0.393$, $t = -6.368$, $p < 0.001$).

Additionally, when quality of work life is included as a mediator, the direct effect of responsible leadership on turnover intention becomes non-significant ($B = -0.104$, $t = -1.336$, $p = 0.183$). This change suggests the presence of a complete mediation effect, which is confirmed via the indirect effect that shows a negative and significant complete mediating effect of quality of work life ($B = -0.320$, 95% *BootIC* = -0.440 , -0.210), confirming this way the second hypothesis.

3.2.3 Mediating role of well-being on the relationship responsible leadership and turnover intention

Regarding third hypothesis, that focus on the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention in the mediated model, responsible leadership has a significant and negative effect on turnover intention ($B = -0.424$, $t = -6.631$, $p < 0.001$), which collaborates our first hypothesis regarding the direct effect.

Responsible leadership also predicts a positively and significantly well-being ($B = 0.387$, $t = 8.221$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, it is possible to verify that well-being has a negative and significant relationship with turnover intentions ($B = -0.693$, $t = -9.602$, $p < 0.001$).

Additionally, when well-being at work is included as a mediator, the direct effect of responsible leadership on turnover intention continues to be significant, but weaker ($B = -0.424$, $t = -6.631$, $p < 0.001$). This change suggests the presence of a partial mediation effect, which is confirmed via the indirect effect that shows a negative and significant partial mediating effect of well-being ($B = -0.268$, 95% *BootIC* = -0.390, -0.177), confirming this way the third hypothesis.

3.2.4 Mediating sequential role of quality of work life and well-being on the relationship responsible leadership and turnover intention

Regarding the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention in the mediated model, the results indicate that quality of work life and well-being at work have significant effects on turnover intention ($B = -0.217, t = -3.607, p < 0.001$; $B = -0.589, t = -7.730, p < 0.001$, respectively).

Additionally, quality of work life and well-being has a positive and significant effect on well-being ($B = 0.298, t = 6.591, p < 0.001$).

When these mediators are included in the model, the direct effect of responsible leadership on turnover intention becomes non-significant ($B = -0.019, t = -0.265, p = 0.791$). This change suggests the presence of a complete mediation effect, whereby responsible leadership influences turnover intention indirectly through quality of work life and well-being at work. The results show a complete sequential mediating effect of quality of work life and well-being on explain the direct relationship of responsible leadership and turnover intentions ($B = -0.143, 95\% BootIC = -0.205, -0.088$) which collaborates our hypothesis 4.

| | Quality of Work Life | | Well-Being at Work | | Turnover Intention | |
|--|----------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | B | LLCI; ULCI | B | LLCI; ULCI | B | LLCI; ULCI |
| Total Effect | | | | | | |
| Constant | | | | | | |
| Responsible Leadership | | | | | -.424** | -.550; -.299 |
| Work Schedule Satisfaction | | | | | .065* | .003; .126 |
| Contractual Situation | | | | | 0.07** | .012; .332 |
| Leadership Role | | | | | .172* | .012; .332 |
| | B | LLCI; ULCI | B | LLCI; ULCI | B | LLCI; ULCI |
| Direct Effect | | | | | | |
| Constant | 2.169** | 1.440; 2.899 | 2.860** | 2.285; 3.436 | | |
| Responsible Leadership | .814** | .696; .931 | .397** | .294; .480 | -.019 | -.159; .121 |
| Well-Being at Work | .298 | .209; .387 | - | - | -.589** | -.739; -.439 |
| Quality of Work Life | - | - | .298** | .209; .387 | -.217** | -.336; -.099 |
| Work Schedule Satisfaction | .071* | -.129; -.014 | -.006 | -.051; .039 | .046 | -.007; .098 |
| Contractual Situation | -.121 | -.270; .028 | -.174** | -.291; -.056 | .043 | -.093; .180 |
| Leadership Role | -.078 | -.382; .226 | -.078 | -.318; .162 | .529** | .255; .803 |
| Preference for Solitary Work | -0.01 | -0.11; 0.09 | 0.11* | 0.03; 0.19 | 0.01* | -0.09; 0.10 |
| | Effect | | B | | LLCI; ULCI | |
| Indirect Effect | | | | | | |
| Responsible Leadership -> Quality of Work Life -> Turnover Intention | | | -.177 | .069 | -.547; -.276 | |
| Responsible Leadership -> Well-Being at Work -> Turnover Intention | | | -.085 | .039 | -.172; -.017 | |
| Responsible Leadership -> Quality of Work Life -> Well-Being at Work -> Turnover Intention | | | -.143 | .030 | -.205; -.088 | |

Figure 4.1 - Research Model Test

Notes: ** $p < 0.001$; * $p < 0.05$

Chapter IV - Discussion and Conclusions

The high employee turnover rate in the hospitality sector poses a critical challenge, given its direct impact on productivity, service quality, and customer satisfaction (Davidson et al., 2010). In response, responsible leadership emerges as a strategic approach, fostering work environments that prioritize employees' quality of life and well-being, thus reducing turnover intention (Voegtlin et al., 2012). This study aimed to explore the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention within the hospitality sector, focusing on quality of work life and workplace well-being as mediating variables.

The results indicate a significant positive relationship for Hypothesis H1, showing that responsible leadership is associated with a reduction in turnover intention. Similarly, Hypothesis H2 reveals that responsible leadership is positively linked to quality of work life, suggesting a strong positive relationship where responsible leaders foster an environment that enhances employees' quality of work life, consequently lowering turnover intention. As noted by Jaya et al. (2023), improving quality of work life, coupled with job satisfaction, significantly reduces turnover intention; this study demonstrates that quality of work life in the hospitality sector, by providing a balanced, safe work environment, enhances employee experience. According to Miska and Mendenhall (2018), responsible leadership encourages such practices, as responsible leaders are committed to creating a work environment that values employee well-being. Furthermore, Durão et al. (2024) add that social support and interpersonal interactions are crucial in improving quality of work life and reducing employee stress in the hospitality sector. This study shows that workplaces fostered by leaders who prioritize empathy and cooperation enhance employees' well-being and satisfaction, particularly in high-stress environments such as hospitality. Sirgy et al. (2001) and Sinval et al. (2019) also argue that a work environment where employees feel secure, valued, and maintain a healthy work-life balance significantly reduces turnover intention. This underscores that responsible leaders, by promoting favorable working conditions, increase employee satisfaction, directly impacting retention.

Hypothesis H3, which explores the mediation of the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention through work well-being, the results indicated that work well-being acts as a significant, though moderate, mediator in the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention. This finding suggests that by improving employees' well-being, responsible leadership contributes to a reduction in turnover intention. Although workplace well-being influences turnover, it does not serve as the primary mediator. Warr

(1994) emphasizes that well-being positively impacts employee motivation and satisfaction, helping reduce burnout and emotional exhaustion. However, factors such as leadership style and quality of work life exert a more direct influence on employees' decisions to stay or leave. In analyzing the hospitality sector, Karatepe (2010) highlights that although well-being helps mitigate stress and emotional exhaustion, leadership support and an organizational environment conducive to quality of work life are more decisive in retaining employees. Similarly, Danna and Griffin (1999) affirm that, while well-being improves employee satisfaction, it is strongly influenced by organizational factors such as management and corporate culture. As Maak and Pless (2005) argue, responsible leaders are essential for creating healthy work environments, especially in the hospitality sector. Considering the impact of well-being as a mediator, the study reinforces that workplace well-being, while vital for emotional balance and employee satisfaction, is best enhanced when leaders promote better quality of work life. This is particularly relevant in hospitality, where stress and emotional demands are high, and practices like leader recognition and direct support play a crucial role in increasing employee commitment (Karatepe & Karadas, 2012).

Regarding Hypothesis H4, the results confirm that responsible leadership positively impacts employee retention; quality of work life is the strongest mediator in the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention, followed by the sequentially mediated effect through quality of work life and well-being. Doh & Quigley (2014) show that by fostering a work environment that values employees, responsible leadership directly contributes to retention, especially in sectors like hospitality where physical and emotional demands are intense. Huang et al. (2016) further support this view by emphasizing that responsible leadership generates a cycle of positive effects by improving both quality of work life and well-being—critical factors for reducing turnover in the sector.

Thus, responsible leadership plays a central role in the hospitality sector, where daily challenges such as long working hours and high emotional demands make turnover a pressing concern. In this context, leaders who promote favorable working conditions and value employee well-being can directly impact the quality of work life. Davidson et al. (2010) emphasize that creating a positive, balanced environment in hospitality is essential for improving quality of work life and reducing turnover intention.

Moreover, responsible leaders in hospitality can mitigate the effects of stress and emotional exhaustion, which are prevalent among employees in this sector (Karatepe, 2010). By promoting support and work-life balance, these leaders reduce turnover intention and improve

employee performance, which is particularly important given the high turnover and associated costs in the sector (Davidson et al., 2010).

Oliveira et al. (2021) further highlight that responsible management practices, such as investing in quality of work life and well-being, directly contribute to talent retention in hospitality. By creating a work environment that values employee development and well-being, responsible leaders ensure employees feel heard and valued, directly impacting retention.

Finally, in hospitality, responsible leadership not only fosters active dialogue with internal and external stakeholders but also balances their interests, benefiting the organization. Maak & Pless (2006) argue that responsible policies and actions help create a shared vision, leading to organizational success and reducing turnover intention. In a sector where emotionally, demanding work is a daily reality, responsible leadership mitigates negative impacts and improves both quality of work life and employee well-being (Karatepe & Uludag, 2008).

The study's findings confirm that responsible leadership is instrumental in employee retention in the hotel sector, with quality of work life exerting a stronger mediating effect than well-being. Quality of work life was shown to be the primary mediator in the relationship between responsible leadership and turnover intention, aligning with prior research emphasizing that creating favorable work conditions, including safety, recognition, and professional development, is essential for employee satisfaction and retention (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014; Karatepe & Karadas, 2012). These findings also underline that workplace well-being, while essential for motivation and emotional balance, serves a complementary mediating role, enhanced by improvements in quality of work life promoted by responsible leadership (Warr, 1994; Danna & Griffin, 1999). In conclusion, this study highlights that responsible leadership practices prioritizing quality of work life and well-being not only increase employee commitment but also provide a sustainable competitive advantage for hospitality organizations, fostering a more motivated, resilient workforce less likely to leave the organization (Voegtlin, 2011; Maak & Pless, 2006).

4.2 Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study makes a substantial contribution to the literature on responsible leadership, focusing on reducing employee turnover in the hospitality sector. Responsible leadership emerges as a vital component in promoting an ethical, well-being-centered work environment that effectively addresses the unique challenges of a high-turnover and emotionally demanding sector (Ahmad et al., 2020). This leadership style directly impacts employees' quality of work life and well-being, while also reducing turnover intentions, as demonstrated by this study's

findings. Quality of work life has proven to be a primary mediating factor, supporting Walton (1986) and Sirgy et al. (2001)'s notion that fostering a safe, integrated, and motivating work environment is essential for employee satisfaction and retention.

Furthermore, responsible leadership practices, such as adjusted working hours and regular breaks, promote work-life balance, reducing both physical and emotional strain. Studies by Deery (2008) and Lee & Madera (2019) underscore the importance of flexible policies and strategic breaks, which help mitigate work-related stress, making the work environment more sustainable and appealing for employees. By valuing individual employee needs, responsible leadership enhances job satisfaction, fostering a healthy and cohesive environment where employees feel respected and supported (Karatepe, 2010; Ahmad et al., 2020).

Thus, theoretical knowledge on the effects of responsible leadership translates directly into organizational practices, enabling a more effective approach to address challenges related to turnover and well-being in the hospitality sector. Through implementing elements of responsible leadership, organizations can enact effective retention strategies and enhance quality of work life.

In practice, the study suggests that organizations cultivate responsible leaders by implementing continuous training and mentoring programs focused on developing core competencies such as empathy, communication, and conflict management. These programs are essential in fostering a leadership style attuned to employee needs, encouraging recognition practices and professional development. As Luu (2023) notes, continuous feedback and growth incentives increase employees' sense of value, strengthening their commitment to the organization and reducing turnover intentions.

Such practices contribute not only to reducing turnover but are essential in the hospitality sector, where direct client interaction and emotional pressures require ongoing support. Responsible leadership offers a sustainable, long-term solution to talent retention in a sector historically marked by high turnover, fostering an organizational culture that values well-being and resilience (Davidson & Wang, 2011; Freire & Gonçalves, 2021).

4.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study presents several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results, as is common in any research. Firstly, the data collection method, based on an online questionnaire, may have introduced response biases and self-selection, as participants responded in uncontrolled conditions. This type of collection may lead to responses influenced by the participant's environment and a convenience sample, which reduces the generalizability of the results to the broader population.

Additionally, the cross-sectional and correlational nature of the study represents another limitation, as it prevents causal inferences between the investigated variables. While associations between responsible leadership, quality of work life, well-being, and turnover intention were identified, it is not possible to confirm the direction of influence among these variables with the current design (Bryman, 2016). It is suggested that future studies employ longitudinal designs that allow the observation of relationships over time, which may contribute to a more robust understanding of causal dynamics.

To address potential common method variance, the marker variable technique (Preference for Individual Work) was included. However, the observed correlation between this variable and the main study variables indicates that this method may not have been entirely effective in eliminating common method bias. Although the Harman's test was also conducted, suggesting that single-source bias does not constitute a significant threat, it is important to interpret the results cautiously due to the limitations and criticisms associated with this technique (Podsakoff et al., 2024; Fuller et al., 2016; Hultand et al., 2017; Tehseen et al., 2017).

For future research, it would be beneficial to adopt data collection methods that include multiple sources or different time points, which could help to mitigate common method bias more effectively. Additionally, exploring other contexts and more diverse samples to increase the external validity of the results would be recommended, such as involving different sectors or collecting data in environments with more rigorous control over response conditions.

Future studies could also deepen the analysis of mediating variables, considering, for instance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which may influence the observed relationships in various ways.

Finally, it is recommended that future studies examine quality of work life and well-being in more detail, exploring the different dimensions that constitute these constructs. A multidimensional approach to quality of work life, for example, could include an analysis of factors such as work-life balance, recognition, and development opportunities, which would

allow a deeper understanding of how each dimension influences the observed relationships (Sirgy et al., 2001).

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that responsible leadership significantly impacts the reduction of employee turnover intentions in the hospitality sector by promoting improvements in quality of work life and well-being at work. By adopting practices that emphasize human development and a balance between professional and personal life, responsible leaders contribute to a healthier and more sustainable work environment, essential for talent retention in a sector characterized by high emotional demands and intensive client interactions.

The findings highlight the importance of leadership that transcends financial objectives and aligns with ethical and social commitments, placing employee well-being at the core of organizational strategy. In this context, responsible leadership not only mitigates factors such as stress and emotional exhaustion but also fosters greater job satisfaction and service quality, reinforcing the value of an integrated approach to people management.

It is hoped that this study will encourage managers and leaders in the hospitality sector to adopt responsible leadership practices as an effective strategy to strengthen the work environment and reduce turnover. Future studies could enhance this line of research by examining the role of other mediating variables, such as social support and recognition, expanding the understanding of how these interactions can further amplify the benefits of responsible leadership in retaining employees.

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Appendices

Appendices A

Dear Participant,

As part of the master's program in Management at Iscte – University Institute of Lisbon, I would like to invite you to participate in a study aimed at analyzing employees' perceptions regarding various aspects of their professional situation. This study focuses on leadership and quality of life in the workplace and is being conducted within several hotel companies.

Your participation is crucial to enrich the understanding of these topics and contribute to advancing knowledge in the field of human resources.

To participate in this study, it is required that you have been under the supervision of the same manager for a minimum period of 3 months.

Please respond to the questions spontaneously, as there are no right or wrong answers, what matters your opinion is. Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 10 minutes.

It is important to emphasize that the data collected will be used solely for academic purposes. All information will be handled in aggregate form and not individually. We assure you that your participation is completely confidential and voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time while maintaining full anonymity.

Thank you very much for your participation.

Catarina Nobre

For any inquiries, please contact: csnes@iscte-iul.pt

Appendices B

Responsible Leadership

Below, we present a list of groups or stakeholders with whom your direct supervisor may interact, with varying frequency, in their professional environment. Based on your knowledge of your supervisor's daily professional activities, please indicate how often they interact with each group or stakeholder.

| | 1 Not at all | 2 Occasionally | 3 Sometimes | 4 Quite Often | 5 Frequently, If not always |
|---|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Customers | | | | | |
| Employees | | | | | |
| Members of partner entities or alliances | | | | | |
| Unions | | | | | |
| Representatives of the local community (for example: societies, associations, churches, ect.) | | | | | |
| Non-governmental organizations (for example: groups advocating social or environmental causes | | | | | |
| Owners/ Shareholders and Investors | | | | | |
| Government institutions or regulatory entities (includes interactions with government employees or representatives of local authorities | | | | | |
| Suppliers | | | | | |
| Top managers | | | | | |

We now ask that you reflect on the attitudes and behaviors of your supervisor and indicate how often each of the following statements applies to them. My supervisor:

| | 1 Not at all | 2 Occasionally | 3 Sometimes | 4 Quite often | 5 Frequently, if not always |
|--|-----------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Demonstrates awareness of the claims made by the most relevant group/stakeholders | | | | | |
| Takes into consideration the consequences of decisions for the groups/stakeholders most impacted by them | | | | | |
| Involves the affected groups/stakeholders in the decision-making process | | | | | |
| Considers the claims of different groups/stakeholders before making a decision | | | | | |
| Attempts to reach a consensus among the affected groups/stakeholders | | | | | |

Appendices C

Quality of Work Life

In this section, you should reflect on the experiences, characteristics, and conditions provided by your job. Based on these, indicate the extent to which the following statements apply to you and your work experience.

| | 1 Completely False | 2 False | 3 Partially False | 4 Neither True nor False | 5 Partially True | 6 True | 7 Completely True |
|--|--------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| I feel physically safe at work | | | | | | | |
| My job provides me with a good health plan | | | | | | | |
| I do my best to stay healthy and fit | | | | | | | |
| I am satisfied with the salary I receive for my work | | | | | | | |
| I feel that my job in this organization is stable | | | | | | | |
| My job benefits my family | | | | | | | |
| I have good friends at work | | | | | | | |
| I have enough time outside of work to enjoy other important things in life | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| I feel recognized for my work in this organization | | | | | | | |
| Both my colleagues in this organization and people in my profession respect me as a professional and specialist in my field of work | | | | | | | |
| I feel that my job allows me to realize my full potential | | | | | | | |
| I feel that I am fulfilling my potential as a professional and specialist in my field of work | | | | | | | |
| I feel that I am constantly learning new things that improve my work | | | | | | | |
| This job allows me to improve my professional skills | | | | | | | |
| My job involves a great deal of creativity | | | | | | | |
| My job allows me to develop my creativity outside of work | | | | | | | |

Appendices D

Well-Being at Work

The following questions are about your overall well-being and your feelings about work. Reflecting on the past month, to what extent has your work made you feel as described below?

| | 1 Never | 2 Rarely | 3 For some time | 4 Most of the time | 5 Almost all the time | 6 All the time |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Tense | | | | | | |
| Anxious | | | | | | |
| Worried | | | | | | |
| Comfortable | | | | | | |
| Calm | | | | | | |
| Relaxed | | | | | | |
| Depressed | | | | | | |
| Melancholic | | | | | | |
| Unhappy | | | | | | |
| Motivated | | | | | | |
| Excited | | | | | | |
| Optimistic | | | | | | |

Appendices E

Turnover Intention

We now ask you to reflect on your relationship with the organization where you work. Based on that relationship, please express your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements, using the response scale provided below.

| | 1 Strongly Disagree | 2 Disagree | 3 Neither Agree nor Disagree | 4 Agree | 5 Strongly Agree |
|--|---------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|------------|------------------------|
| If I could choose again, I would choose to work at the organization where I currently work | | | | | |
| It is quite likely that I will look for a new job in the next year | | | | | |
| I often think about leaving the organization where I currently work | | | | | |
| I feel insecure about my future employment | | | | | |
| I feel that I might lose this job in the near future | | | | | |

Appendices F
Sociodemographic Characteristics - Relationship with Supervisor
Part I

We would like to know if, in your professional activity, you report to a direct supervisor, meaning if there is someone who oversees your work.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

How long have you been working with this supervisor? (Years and Months)

How often do you interact with your direct supervisor?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Biweekly
- ☐ Monthly

What support do you use most when interacting with your direct supervisor?

- ☐ Virtual
- ☐ Hybrid
- ☐ In-person

Appendices G
Sociodemographic Data Related to the Participant

Part II

To conclude, we ask you to provide some personal data for statistical purposes. Please remember that your responses will remain anonymous and confidential. Kindly select the option that best describes your current situation.

Age (in years):

Gender:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Education (highest level completed):

- ☐ Up to 9th grade
- ☐ Between 10th and 12th grade
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Master's degree
- ☐ Post-graduate
- ☐ Doctorate

How long have you been working in your current organization? (years and months)

What is your contractual status with your current organization?

- ☐ Permanent
- ☐ Fixed-term contract
- ☐ Temporary work / outsourcing / freelance
- ☐ Intern
- ☐ Other situation? Which?

Do you hold a leadership position?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

In which service area do you work?

Which shift do you usually work?

- ☐ Morning (before midday)
- ☐ Afternoon (from midday to late afternoon)
- ☐ Evening (after late afternoon until midnight)
- ☐ Night (after midnight until morning)
- ☐ Rotating shifts

To what extent are you satisfied with your work schedule?

- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- ☐ Satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied

What work arrangement do you follow?

- ☐ Full-time (40 hours per week)
- ☐ Part-time (less than 40 hours per week) If yes, how many hours do you work? _____

How flexible is your work schedule?

- ☐ Very flexible
- ☐ Flexible
- ☐ Somewhat flexible
- ☐ Not flexible at all

What is the size of your organization, approximately how many employees?

- ☐ Micro (up to 9 employees)
- ☐ Small (10 to 49 employees)
- ☐ Medium (50 to 250 employees)
- ☐ Large (more than 250 employees)

Appendices H

Debriefing

Info Final Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for your valuable participation! Now that you have completed the study, I would like to provide you with some additional information.

This study is being conducted by me, under the supervision of Professors Ana Patrícia Duarte and Luís Miguel Simões, as part of the preparation for my Master's dissertation in Management. The overall aim of the study is to investigate the effect of responsible leadership on both the quality of work-life balance and the behaviors of those working with such leaders. Responsible leadership refers to a leadership style that is based on relationships with various stakeholders and the promotion of a balance between sustainable needs, which include economic, environmental, and social pillars.

In this research, we aim to verify whether this type of leadership promotes work-life balance, increases well-being, and reduces turnover intention among hospitality sector employees. The focus on this sector is due to its high employee turnover rates and the difficulties it faces in attracting labor.

Should you wish to access the results of the study, clarify any doubts, or provide feedback, feel free to contact us at the following email: csnes@iscte-iul.pt

Once again, we greatly appreciate the time you have invested in participating in this study, which is crucial to its success. Thank you!

Catarina Nobre

Finally, if you are interested in learning more about the topic, you can access the following open-access sources:

Simões, L. M. (2020). The relationship between responsible leadership and individual behaviors at work: The role of affective commitment [Master's dissertation, Iscte - University Institute of Lisbon]. Iscte Repository. <http://hdl.handle.net/10071/21022>

Haque, A., Fernando, M., & Caputi, P. (2019). The relationship between responsible leadership and organizational commitment and the mediating effect of employee turnover intentions: An empirical study with Australian employees. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 156, 759-774. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10551-017-3575-6>

Appendices I

Harman's Test Results

| | Components | | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----|-----|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Scale - Indicators | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| RL - Demonstrates awareness of the claims made by the most relevant group/stakeholders | .51 | .17 | .06 | -.01 | -.34 | -.06 | .08 | -.18 | .16 |
| RL - Takes into consideration the consequences of decisions for the groups/stakeholders most impacted by them | .46 | .09 | .10 | .35 | .02 | -.10 | -.26 | .04 | .15 |
| RL - Involves the affected groups/stakeholders in the decision-making process | .49 | .08 | .15 | .23 | -.23 | .09 | -.11 | .24 | .12 |
| RL - Considers the claims of different groups/stakeholders before making a decision | .54 | .24 | .18 | .15 | -.32 | -.01 | -.25 | .17 | -.001 |
| RL - Attempts to reach a consensus among the affected groups/stakeholders | .57 | .18 | .13 | -.10 | -.32 | -.12 | -.02 | -.06 | .009 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| QWL - I feel physically safe at work | .43 | .50 | .27 | .02 | .03 | .03 | .07 | -.04 | -.11 |
| QWL - My job provides me with a good health plan and fit | .20 | .28 | .54 | -.30 | -.01 | .15 | .08 | -.05 | -.04 |
| QWL - I am satisfied with the salary I receive for my work | .35 | .21 | .32 | .05 | -.05 | -.01 | .16 | -.12 | .25 |
| QWL - I feel that my job in this organization is stable | .52 | .009 | .25 | -.27 | -.09 | .28 | .09 | .18 | -.02 |
| QWL - My job benefits my family | .54 | .31 | .37 | -.22 | .05 | .04 | -.13 | .07 | -.03 |
| QWL - I have good friends at work | .59 | -.34 | -.15 | .25 | .15 | .10 | .02 | -.01 | .06 |
| QWL - I have good friends at work | .24 | .38 | .23 | .16 | .49 | .21 | -.08 | -.21 | .06 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|------|-------|------|------|------|------|------|
| QWL - I have enough time outside of work to enjoy other important things in life | .63 | -.62 | .09 | .04 | .26 | .19 | -.12 | .21 | -.17 |
| QWL - I feel recognized for my work in this organization | .74 | .03 | -.02 | -.07 | -.05 | .06 | -.05 | -.13 | -.16 |
| QWL - Both my colleagues in this organization and people in my profession respect me as a professional and specialist in my field of work | .36 | .36 | .33 | -.02 | .06 | -.06 | -.08 | -.17 | -.08 |
| I feel that my job allows me to realize my full potential | .73 | -.18 | -.10 | .12 | .03 | .22 | .11 | .12 | .008 |
| QWL - I feel that I am fulfilling my potential as a professional and specialist in my field of work | .65 | -.11 | .01 | .22 | -.13 | -.05 | .07 | .06 | -.10 |
| QWL - I feel that I am constantly learning new things that improve my work | .70 | -.22 | -.10 | -.007 | .03 | -.08 | -.09 | .04 | .004 |
| QWL - This job allows me to improve my professional skills | .71 | -.06 | -.18 | .22 | -.03 | -.14 | .09 | -.14 | -.09 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| QWL - My job involves a great deal of creativity | .59 | -.29 | -.15 | .24 | -.10 | .09 | .35 | -.10 | -.11 |
| QWL - My job allows me to develop my creativity outside of work | .66 | -.32 | -.12 | .17 | .06 | .26 | .13 | .001 | -.08 |
| WBW - Tense | .11 | .64 | -.39 | -.20 | -.07 | .14 | .07 | -.02 | -.03 |
| WBW - Anxious | .17 | .40 | -.58 | -.12 | -.10 | .09 | -.03 | .21 | .06 |
| WBW - Worried | .02 | .52 | -.36 | -.18 | -.02 | .12 | -.01 | .03 | .17 |
| WBW - Comfortable | .48 | -.05 | .08 | -.14 | .09 | -.11 | -.06 | -.07 | -.02 |
| WBW - Calm | .60 | -.19 | .08 | -.16 | .06 | -.07 | .31 | .12 | .37 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| WBW - Relaxed | .44 | -.40 | -.07 | -.49 | .07 | .08 | .03 | -.03 | -.08 |
| WBW - Depressed | .62 | -.26 | -.03 | -.04 | .14 | -.32 | -.17 | -.06 | .12 |
| WBW - Melancholic | .22 | .77 | -.15 | .07 | .003 | .05 | -.02 | .08 | -.06 |
| WBW - Unhappy | .24 | .68 | -.23 | .04 | .06 | .09 | .06 | -.23 | .09 |
| WBW - Motivated | .15 | .74 | -.19 | .005 | .05 | .01 | -.09 | .01 | .05 |
| WBW - Excited | .57 | -.31 | -.08 | -.12 | .11 | .01 | -.18 | -.09 | .12 |
| WBW - Optimistic | .45 | -.32 | -.03 | -.29 | .20 | -.14 | -.06 | .14 | .12 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|-----|------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| IT - If I could choose again, I would choose to work at the organization where I currently work | -.50 | .07 | .05 | .17 | .14 | .28 | -.08 | .11 | .14 |
| IT - It is quite likely that I will look for a new job in the next year | -.52 | -.27 | .26 | .08 | -.02 | .21 | .08 | .03 | .22 |
| IT - I often think about leaving the organization where I currently work | -.52 | -.03 | .48 | .09 | -.20 | .09 | .04 | .05 | -.06 |
| Preference for Individual Work - I prefer working with others rather than working alone | .04 | .27 | .08 | -.04 | .14 | -.32 | .28 | .30 | -.10 |
| Preference for Individual Work - Working with a group is better than working alone | .06 | .32 | .14 | .13 | .22 | -.14 | .25 | .06 | .02 |
| Preference for Individual Work - If I could choose, I would prefer to work alone | -.06 | .61 | .12 | .14 | .23 | -.24 | .11 | .19 | -.05 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|-------|------|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Variance Explained by the Factor (% of Variance) | 24.67 | 13.54 | 6.66 | 4.46 | 3.92 | 3.52 | 3.18 | 2.95 | 2.68 |
| Cumulative Total Variance (% of Variance) | | | | 65.61 | | | | | |
| KMO | | | | .797 | | | | | |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | | | | 5896,28, < 001 | | | | | |