

Motivations and commitment to work in the hospitality industry: Investigating employee psychology and responsible organizational behaviors

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Purpose: A number of hospitality businesses are understaffed and are experiencing severe labor shortages, in various contexts. In many cases, hotels and restaurants are finding it difficult to retain and recruit motivated employees. In this light, this research uses key constructs related to the self-determination theory and integrates them with a responsible human resources management (HRM) measure, to investigate the antecedents of organizational commitment. The underlying objective of this study is to shed light on employee psychology and on responsible organizational behaviors in the hospitality industry.

Design/Methodology/Approach: Primary data were captured through an online questionnaire distributed via popular LinkedIn groups that represent hospitality employees. A composite-based structural equations modelling approach was utilized to confirm the reliability and validity of the chosen factors and to shed light on the causal paths of this contribution's proposed model.

Findings: The results indicate that there are highly significant direct and indirect effects in this study, particularly between extrinsic motivations - organizational commitment and between responsible HRM - organizational commitment. These relationships are mediated by intrinsic motivations.

Practical implications: This research implies that practitioners ought to incentivize and reward hardworking employees, in a commensurate manner, to offer them great working environments as well as appropriate conditions of employment, to enhance their loyalty, minimize turnover rates, and to attract promising talent.

Theoretical implications: This contribution advances a robust Responsible Organizational Behavior (ROB) model comprising responsible HRM, extrinsic rewards, intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment.

Originality/Value: This empirical study incorporates a responsible HRM construct with extrinsic and intrinsic motivations. It confirms that they are significant antecedents of organizational commitment. Unlike previous research, this contribution focuses on employee psychology as well as on strategic organizational behaviors during a time when tourism businesses are experiencing an increase in demand for their services, in the aftermath of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It raises awareness on the industry's perennial challenges in attracting and retaining employees.

Keywords: organizational commitment; intrinsic motivation; extrinsic motivation; responsible human resources management, hospitality employees; hospitality industry.

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1. Introduction

The hotels and restaurants are filling up again, almost reaching pre COVID-19 levels. However, this positive development has led several executives to face significant challenges that are related to the rapid increase in demand for their hospitality services. Employers are frequently experiencing a shortage of personnel who are willing to work in the industry (Skift, 2022; Skift, 2023). Generally, the hospitality sector demands long working hours. Employees are usually required to work at night, on Sundays and in public holidays. Therefore, many hospitality businesses find it hard to employ and to properly train motivated employees to meet and exceed their customers' expectations about service quality standards. At times, they are forced to recruit inexperienced and unskilled individuals for vacancies in food and beverage services, as well as in the front office and housekeeping departments.

Notwithstanding, in many cases, hospitality employees may experience a state of uncertainty because their job does not offer secure employment prospects, particularly if they are engaged on a temporary basis, due to the industry's seasonality issues (Camilleri, 2022a). Very often, they are not affiliated or allowed to join trade associations. Therefore, they are not protected by formal collective agreements. Consequently, employees could be exploited in their working environments. Typically, the candidates for these positions are either immigrants, senior citizens, early school leavers or individuals with no qualifications, among other vulnerable groups in society (Leung Sun *et al.*, 2021).

Industry stakeholders including policy makers and academia, among others, are increasingly exerting their influence on hospitality businesses to offer decent conditions of employment, to their human resources. (Camilleri, 2016; ILO, 2023). Various researchers commend that the hospitality practitioners ought to be fair, honest, trustworthy and respectful towards their employees (Hwang *et al.*, 2022). They posit that human resources managers should look after their valued employees

by offering them great working environments, fair and just human resources practices, as well as fun, creative and productive organizational cultures (Mitchell *et al.*, 2020). This way, they can retain their best employees, minimize their turnover, and attract new ones.

Job candidates are lured by hospitality employers who offer job security and peace of mind, particularly if their bottom lines are financially sound. Employees are motivated to work for benevolent employers; when they receive comprehensive benefits like good salaries and wages, when they are assured about their career progression prospects, when they are provided training and development opportunities (Butler *et al.*, 2021), and when they are rewarded in a commensurate manner for their efforts. The human resources will surely appreciate the perks they receive, including health insurance covers, wellness programs, corporate offers, discounted services, and the like. Such extrinsic rewards can have a very significant effect on the employees' intrinsic motivations and on their job satisfaction in their workplace environment (Ryan and Deci, 2020).

Moreover, there are other factors that can have an impact on the employees' emotional needs. For example, employees may want to be valued by their employers. They will probably lose their motivation and organizational commitment if they are not receiving adequate recognition and sufficient compensation for their work. Poor working conditions can have an adverse effect on the employees' morale and may lead to negative attitudes and behaviors, that can ultimately result in discontent, lower productivity levels and reduced service quality to customers.

This research investigates the hospitality employees' state of mind about their job, during a time when tourism figures are returning to pre-COVID-19 levels. It examines their perceptions on their employers' human resources management and seeks to understand whether their responsible behaviors, or lack thereof, are motivating them, or not motivating them, in their job. The study integrates valid measures from the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) (Deci and Ryan, 2000), namely, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, with a responsible HRM construct, drawn from the

business ethics literature (Camilleri, 2019), to better understand whether these factors are affecting the employees' organizational commitment. This latter construct is associated with organizational behavior and/or organizational psychology field of studies (Aguiar-Quintana *et al.*, 2020).

Therefore, this research builds on previous theoretical underpinnings related to employee psychology and responsible organizational behavior, in a hospitality industry context. Yet, it differentiates itself from previous contributions. Although there is a wide plethora of academic studies that have utilized measures from SDT, previous research has never incorporated them with a responsible HRM, within the same research model. Arguably, unlike previous empirical investigations, this research raises awareness on two different sides of the same coin. Firstly, it examines the employees' intrinsic motivations and organizational commitment in their working environment. Secondly, it explores their perceptions about responsible HRM practices and of extrinsic motivational incentives adopted by their employer.

Specifically, the research questions of this contribution are: RQ1: How and to what extent are extrinsic motivators and responsible HRM affecting the employees' intrinsic motivations? RQ2: How and to what extent are their intrinsic motivations influencing their organizational commitment? RQ3: How and to what degree is the intrinsic motivations construct mediating responsible HRM – organizational commitment and/or extrinsic motivations – organizational commitment causal paths?

In sum, the authors anticipate that responsible HRM, extrinsic rewards as well as intrinsic motivational factors can be used to instill a sense of purpose in the companies' human resources and could be utilized to foster their commitment to pursue organizational goals. In addition, they demonstrate that their original Responsible Organizational Behavior (ROB) model is robust in terms of its constructs' reliabilities and validities.

2. Literature review

2.1 Organizational commitment

Over time, employees build an emotional attachment with their organization. Such a psychological connection is usually referred to as ‘organizational commitment’. This notion is usually associated with the individuals’ identification with and affinity with their employer (Aguiar-Quintana, *et al.*, 2020). Many researchers posit that the organizational commitment construct is related to socially acceptable behaviors that are usually manifested when employees are willing to accept their employers’ values, norms and goals. In other words, members of staff are committed to their employers as they are emotionally connected to them (Agyeiwaah *et al.*, 2022). Very often, they may feel obliged to pursue their organization’s goals, especially if they have no option, other than to continue working for them. In reality, it may prove difficult for employees to disengage from their employer unless they have a disposable income deriving from other sources and/or adequate financial resources to support themselves and their families.

Debatably, there may be different reasons that explain why employees are committed to work for certain employers. Individuals may be willing to join specific organizations and to become their members of staff, particularly those that reflect their own values. Alternatively, they seek employment with certain employers in exchange for rewards and benefits. The employees’ commitment is usually characterized by three related factors: (i) acceptance of the employers’ values; (ii) willingness to contribute towards achieving their objectives; and a (iii) desire to remain affiliated with their organization.

Organizations are expected to communicate about their goals, as well as on their modus operandi with their human resources. It is in their interest to monitor their performance on a day-to-day basis (Aguiar-Quintana *et al.*, 2020; Camilleri, 2022b). Moreover, they can use responsible HRM practices and corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles to instill their employees’

intrinsic motivations (Sun *et al.*, 2022). One of the responsibilities of human resources managers is to identify the factors that can increase their members of staff's organizational commitment as well as their productivity levels in their jobs.

2.2 Intrinsic motivations

Previous contributions relied on the cognitive evaluation theory (CET) and on the self-determination theories (SDT) to explore how external and internal motivations of employees could influence their workplace environments (Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2019). CET suggests that certain events can have an impact on the individuals' perceived competences (Camilleri, 2021). Deci and Ryan (1985) argued that specific organizational behaviors may result in positive effects on the self-esteem of individuals and/or could enhance their intrinsic motivations on the job.

According to CET, the initiation and regulation of the individuals' behaviors are dependent on informational controlling as well as on amotivating aspects. Deci and Ryan (1985) imply that whilst the informational aspects can progressively influence the individuals' intrinsic motivations; the controlling aspects could facilitate the persons' perceptions about the causes of their successes or of their failures. Deci and Ryan (1985) contended that such controlling aspects can negatively impact the individuals' intrinsic motivations. These authors went on to suggest that avolition aspects on the job, or the lack of motivation from the part of the employees, can facilitate their perceived incompetence (this refers to perceived ineptitudes), thereby affecting intrinsic motivations in workplace environments.

SDT suggests that intrinsic motivations are related to the individuals' levels of self-esteem and to their morale. Deci and Ryan (2000) contended that the individuals' autonomy, relatedness and competence could motivate them to pursue self-determined behaviors (An and Han, 2020). Generally, such self-actualization needs are necessary for the employees' emotive health and

psychological well-being (An and Han, 2020; Berezan *et al.*, 2020). However, one should bear in mind that all individuals possess unique personalities and values. Thus, employees do not feel the same motivations as their peers.

SDT raises awareness on the importance of appraising employees to satisfy their emotional needs and to encourage them to pursue productive behaviors. The employers' positive relationships and ongoing communications with employees can stimulate their well-being and their self-confidence at work (Berezan *et al.*, 2020). On the contrary, negative criticism can have an unfavorable effect on intrinsic motivations (Guo *et al.*, 2014).

Arguably, the organizations that look after their human resources will encourage them to improve their performance to achieve corporate objectives (Wallace *et al.*, 2016). The employers that foster collaborative working relationships and teamwork among employees are consolidating their organizational commitment. The employees' basic needs for belongingness and of forging connections with other human beings are usually associated with their intrinsic motivations (Dicke *et al.*, 2020). The individuals' interactions and reciprocity with colleagues as well as their psychological wellbeing at work, can also affect their organizational citizenship (Zhao *et al.*, 2021). Their relatedness with others could influence their job commitment, particularly if they are happy in their working environment and if enjoy doing their job (Kim *et al.*, 2020). This research hypothesizes:

H1: Intrinsic motivations significantly affect organizational commitment.

2.3 Responsible HRM

Socially responsible employers are characterized by their provision of a fair, equitable, inclusive and a non-discriminatory organizational culture. They are usually in a better position to attract the best employees for their jobs, if candidates perceive that they offer transparent and just

recruitment prospects (Choi and Choi, 2021). Responsible organizations tend to reward and incentivize diligent employees in a commensurate manner. They may usually offer on-the-job as well as off-the-job training opportunities to them, to nurture their talents (Leung *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, they communicate with their human resources on a regular basis and evaluate their performance through formal and informal appraisal systems, to identify areas where they can improve their productivity. Their fair working practices can attract job candidates, reduce the likelihood of staff turnover and increases the chances of employee retention.

Indeed, organizational leaders can influence their employees' attitudes and behaviors through responsible HRM to improve their performance. They may motivate their members of staff through different ways and means, to increase their commitment toward their organization, even though they may not be in a position to offer high material rewards (Zhao *et al.*, 2022). Responsible employers can implement initiatives that are intended to encourage employees to pledge their support and commitment to follow their organization's policies and practices. Of course, the onus rests with the employees who have to contribute through their hard work, towards achieving their employer's objectives.

Hence, organizational success is ultimately dependent on the employees' willingness to collaborate with their employer. The person-organization fit theory, suggests that the employees' goals and values ought to be aligned with those of their employer (Zhao *et al.*, 2022). Employees will probably pledge their commitment to work for an honest, fair and trustworthy employer. Job seekers are lured by 'employers of choice' that are in tune with the CSR trends in the societies where they live, whose ethics reflect their own beliefs.

Actually, many researchers note that there is a business case for hospitality businesses to manage their employees in a socially responsible manner, in order to foster their organizational commitment (Camilleri, 2022a; Zhou and He, 2020). Employees feel motivated at work when they

are valued by their employers, when they are involved in their organizations' decision making, and when they are entrusted with responsibilities (Malik *et al.*, 2015; Yakhlef and Nordin, 2020). Conversely, their self-determined behaviors and intrinsic motivations are negatively affected if they are controlled by extrinsic factors (Lin *et al.*, 2022). Hence, employers ought to provide continuous support to their members of staff. They are expected to offer positive reinforcement stimuli to their employees, to increase their morale, and enable them to thrive in their hectic working environments (Camilleri, 2022). Previous research confirms that responsible HRM practices can significantly affect the employees' work engagement (Gürlek and Tuna, 2019), job satisfaction (Appiah, 2019) and psychological wellbeing (Hu *et al.*, 2019; Kim and Kim, 2021). Similarly, this reasoning suggests that:

H2: Responsible HRM significantly affect intrinsic motivations.

H3: Responsible HRM significantly affects organizational commitment.

H3a: Intrinsic motivations mediate Responsible HRM – organizational commitment.

2.4 Extrinsic motivations

Individuals tend to engage in specific behaviors if they are enjoyable and satisfying. However, members of staff may be required to strictly follow their employers' code of conducts, regulations as well as informal procedures. Therefore, the employees' actions are not "self-determined" in their workplace environment (Camilleri, 2022; Deci and Ryan, 1985). They are influenced by an external locus of control and are usually coerced to follow their companies' goals and objectives (Malik *et al.*, 2015).

Their employers expect their human resources to accept and to internalize their organizational procedures as their own (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). They may use extrinsic rewards to urge

employees to perform specific tasks that are not gratifying for them (Gagné *et al.*, 2010; Ryan and Deci, 2020). In many cases, organizational leaders have to utilize external motivators in order to influence and trigger their employees' behaviors (Kim *et al.*, 2020; Diamantidis and Chatzoglou, 2019). They may use different incentives, to encourage them to do so. Over the years, responsible organizational leaders are continuously using tangible and intangible rewards to induce employees to follow their modus operandi, including in the hospitality industry.

Employees are remunerated to carry out specific activities in their workplace environment. Hence, their actions are motivated by financial gains like pay raises, bonuses, and benefits to achieve their employers' goals (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). Yet, they are also influenced by performance appraisals, positive reinforcement and recognition systems (Zhang *et al.*, 2016). Such extrinsic motivations are meant to improve the employees' intrinsic motivations as well as their productivity levels (Camilleri, 2021; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2021). Of course, not all members of staff will respond in a similar manner, to their employers' external stimuli and work incentives. In this case, this study hypothesizes the following:

H4: Extrinsic motivations significantly affect intrinsic motivations.

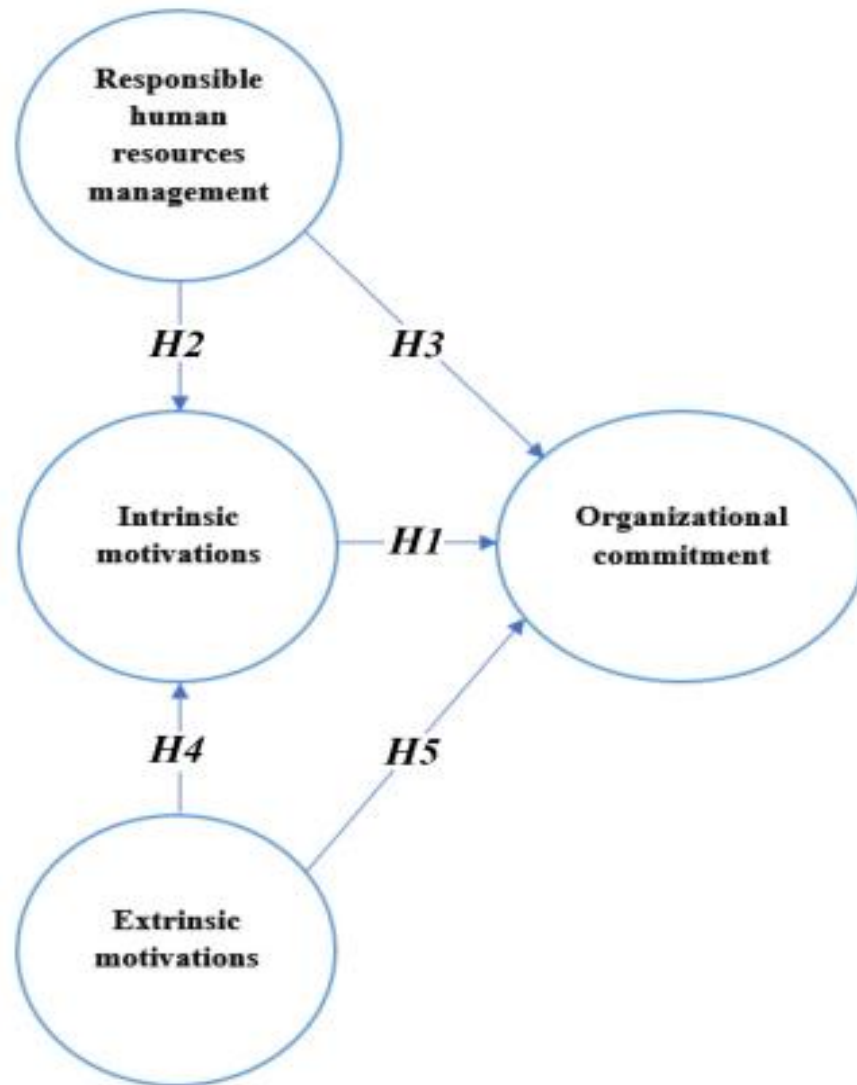
H5: Extrinsic motivations significantly affect organizational commitment.

H5a: Intrinsic motivations mediate extrinsic motivations – organizational commitment.

Figure 1 depicts this contribution's conceptual framework and clearly illustrates the hypotheses of this empirical investigation. In sum, this study hypothesizes that intrinsic motivations precede organizational commitment. It presumes that both responsible HRM and extrinsic motivations can affect intrinsic motivations and organizational commitment. Moreover, this research raises awareness about the mediating effects of intrinsic motivations on extrinsic

motivations - organizational commitment and on responsible HRM – organizational commitment causal paths.

Figure 1. A responsible organizational behavior model



Source: Developed by author

3. Research design

Quantitative data were gathered through a questionnaire that integrated extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (Gagné *et al.*, 2010) with responsible human resources management (Camilleri, 2019) as well with organizational commitment (Bulut and Culha, 2010) constructs.

Table 1 provides a definition of the measuring constructs and features all items that were used in this research.

Table 1 Measures of this research				
<i>Construct</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Items</i>	
Responsible human resources management (HRM)	Camilleri (2019)	This construct refers to the employees' perceptions on their employer's responsible human resources management policies, practices and initiatives that are meant to improve conditions of employment and workplace environments	RHRM1	My employer offers continuous training and development opportunities to employees
			RHRM2	My employer treats its employees in a fair and equitable manner
			RHRM3	My employer safeguards the health, safety and wellbeing of its employees
Intrinsic motivation	Gagné <i>et al.</i> (2010)	This construct refers to the employees' subjective feelings and emotions that emerge while they are engaged in workplace activities, on their job	INTR1	I love my job
			INTR2	I am very happy with my job
Extrinsic motivation	Gagné <i>et al.</i> (2010)	This construct refers to external motivations that are meant to encourage employees to perform workplace activities and to achieve organizational goals. Extrinsic motivations may include receiving financial gains, awards, as well as praise and approval from others	EXT1	My employment provides me a good standard of living
			EXT2	I have a good paying job
Organizational commitment	Bulut and Culha (2010)	This construct refers to the employees' (perceptions about their) identification, connection and involvement with an organization. Organizational commitment describes the employees' attachment with their employer	OC1	I feel responsible for my employers' prospects
			OC2	I am attached to my employer
			OC3	I feel that I am connected with my colleagues at work
			OC4	I feel a strong sense of belonging in my workplace

Source: Developed by author

The researchers followed Chang *et al.*'s (2020) ex-ante remedies to reduce the common method variance bias in their research. They confirm that all respondents completed the same electronic survey questionnaire. The research participants were all members of LinkedIn Groups that represented hospitality employees. The targeted subscribers were informed that they could take part in an academic study that sought to explore their perceptions about responsible human resources management, as well as their motivations and commitment in their workplace

environments. They were assured about the confidentiality and anonymity of this quantitative study, as there was no way that their identity could be revealed. After a few days, there were five hundred forty-two (n=542) research participants who completed this study's electronic survey.

The research participants were expected to shed light on their level of concurrence with the survey's statements through a five-point scale, where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 5 signaled a "strongly agree" response. They revealed their demographic details, including their gender, age, role with their organization, and shed light on how long they were in employment.

4. Results

4.1 The profile of the research participants.

The majority of the respondents were females. The sample consisted of 319 females (58.86%) and 222 males (40.96%). Most respondents (n=386, 67.53%) were between 18 and 39 years of age. The findings indicated that the majority of the research participants were employed in administrative and executive positions. Table 2 provides a descriptive profile of the survey participants.

The respondents have mostly agreed with the survey items in the model as the mean scores (M) were above the mid-point of 3. Whilst extrinsic motivations (EXT1) reported the highest score (M=4.186), intrinsic motivations (INTR2) registered the lowest mean figure (M=3.351). The standard deviations (SD) values were between 0.761 and 1.136.

Table 2 Respondents' demographic details

Variable	Range	N	%	Variable	Range	N	%	
Gender	Female	319	58.86	Age	18-28	240	44.28	
	Male	222	40.96		29-39	126	23.25	
	Missing	1	0.18		40-50	51	9.41	
	Total	542	100.00		51-61	36	6.64	
How long have you been working with your current employer?	Less than 12 months	105	19.37		62+	87	16.05	
	Between 1 and 2 years	88	16.24		Missing	2	0.37	
	Between 2 and 5 years	124	22.88		Total	542	100.00	
	Between 5 and 10 years	152	28.04		In which department do you currently work?	Administrative level (e.g. Director or General Manager)	141	26.01
	More than 10 years	69	12.73			Executive level (e.g. Assistant to the Hotel Manager or Marketing Manager, among others)	305	56.27
	Missing	4	0.74			Operational level (e.g. food and beverage servers, chef, receptionist or housekeeping, among others)	94	17.34
	Total	542	100.00			Missing	2	0.37
				Total	542	100.00		

Source: Developed by author

4.2 Construct reliability and validity

A structural equation modelling partial least squares (SEM-PLS) approach was used to evaluate the quality of the proposed structured model. SEM-PLS' algorithm revealed that the results of the outer loadings were greater than 0.7. Similarly, the reliability values including Cronbach's alpha (Cr Alpha), rho_A and the composite reliability (CR) figures were higher than 0.7. The findings confirmed the convergent validities of the constructs, as the average variance extracted (AVE) were above 0.6. The results indicated that there was evidence of discriminant validity, as the requirements for Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion as well as for those related to Henseler *et al.*'s (2015) heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)'s procedure were all met, as shown in table 3.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics, as well as construct reliability and validity values through SEM-PLS algorithm

Measure	Items	M	SD	Loadings	Cr. Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE	1	2	3	4
1 Extrinsic motivations	EXT1	4.186	0.761	0.863	0.729	0.747	0.88	0.785	0.886	0.889	0.884	0.683
	EXT2	3.596	1.044	0.909								
2 Intrinsic motivations	INTR1	3.784	0.893	0.911	0.808	0.81	0.912	0.839	0.776	0.916	0.860	0.630
	INTR2	3.351	1.064	0.921								
4 Organizational commitment	OC1	3.756	0.968	0.786	0.875	0.879	0.915	0.729	0.709	0.724	0.854	0.715
	OC2	3.605	1.136	0.891								
	OC3	3.686	1.094	0.9								
	OC4	3.504	1.059	0.834								
5 Responsible HRM	RHRM1	3.865	0.865	0.863	0.729	0.738	0.848	0.652	0.495	0.482	0.570	0.807
	RHRM2	3.804	0.906	0.84								
	RHRM3	3.775	0.914	0.711								

Note: The values in italic are the square-root of AVE and the figures on their right-hand side, within the shaded area, represent the results from the HTMT procedure

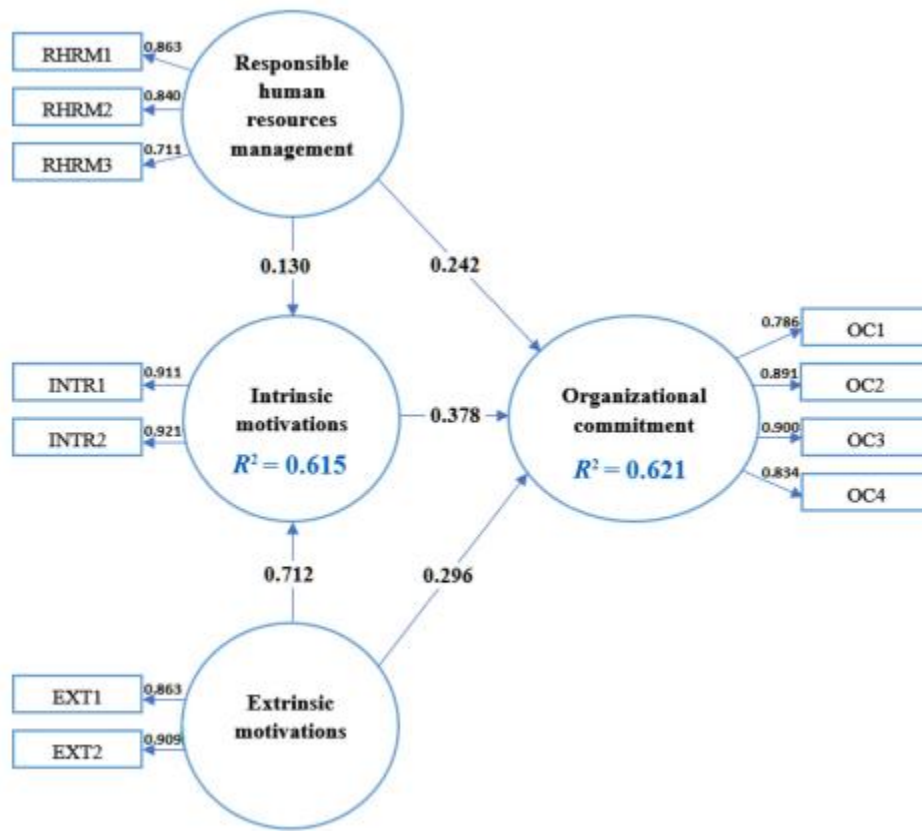
Source: Developed by author

4.3 The results from PLS algorithm and Bootstrapping procedure

The assessment criteria involved an examination of the collinearity among the constructs. The findings reported that the variance inflation factors (VIFs) were below 3.3 (Kock, 2015). The model's predictive power indicated the coefficients of determination (R^2) and the effects (f^2) of the exogenous factors on the endogenous constructs. This study reported that the exogenous constructs affected 61.5% of the participants' intrinsic motivations and 62.1% of their commitment towards their organization.

Extrinsic motivations had the highest effect on intrinsic motivations, where $f^2=0.993$. There were other noteworthy effects between intrinsic motivations and organizational commitment ($f^2=0.146$), and between responsible human resources management and organizational commitment ($f^2=0.113$). There were lower effects between extrinsic motivations and organizational commitment ($f^2=0.088$) and between responsible human resources management and intrinsic motivations ($f^2=0.033$). Figure 2 depicts the explanatory power of this research model.

Figure 2. An illustration of the results from SEM-PLS



Source: Developed by author

The findings from the bootstrapping procedure were used to explore the hypothesized path coefficients. H1 indicates that the employees’ intrinsic motivations are positively and significantly predicting their organizational commitment ($\beta=0.378$, $t=8.593$, $p<0.001$). H2 suggests that the employees’ perceptions about responsible HRM is a significant antecedent of their intrinsic motivations ($\beta=0.130$, $t=3.822$, $p<0.001$). With regards to H3, the same responsible HRM construct is strongly and significantly affecting the employees’ organizational commitment ($\beta=0.242$, $t=6.853$, $p<0.001$).

H4 clearly confirms that the employees’ perceptions about their employers’ external motivators are a very significant precursor of their intrinsic motivations ($\beta=0.712$, $t=26.789$, $p<0.001$). Moreover, H5 was supported too, as extrinsic motivations are also having a positive

effect on their organizational commitment ($\beta=0.296$, $t=6.385$, $p<0.001$). Table 4 features the findings of the hypothesis testing. Table 5 summarizes the results of the mediated analyses. The findings reveal that intrinsic motivations significantly mediate responsible HRM-organizational commitment and extrinsic motivations-organizational commitment causal paths.

Table 4 Hypotheses of this study

Hypothesized relationship	Original sample (O)	Confidence intervals bias corrected		T statistics (O/STDEV)	p values	Interpretation
		2.50%	97.50%			
H1 Intrinsic motivations → Organizational commitment	0.378***	0.282	0.458	8.593	0.000	Supported
H2 Responsible HRM → Intrinsic motivations	0.130***	0.065	0.196	3.822	0.000	Supported
H3 Responsible HRM → Organizational commitment	0.242***	0.173	0.310	6.853	0.000	Supported
H4 Extrinsic motivations → Intrinsic motivations	0.712***	0.659	0.762	26.789	0.000	Supported
H5 Extrinsic motivations → Organizational commitment	0.296***	0.213	0.393	6.385	0.000	Supported

Notes: Critical values *** $P < 0.001$; $T > 1.96$
Source: Developed by author

Table 5 The mediated analyses

Hypothesized relationship	Original sample (O)	Confidence intervals bias corrected		T statistics (O/STDEV)	p values	Interpretation
		2.50%	97.50%			
H3 Responsible HRM → Organizational commitment	0.242**	0.173	0.31	6.853	0.000	Partial mediation
H3a Responsible HRM → Intrinsic motivations → Organizational commitment	0.049***	0.024	0.080	3.564	0.000	
Total effects	0.291***	0.216	0.358	8.028	0.000	
H5 Extrinsic motivations → Organizational commitment	0.296***	0.213	0.393	6.385	0.000	Partial mediation
H5a Extrinsic motivations → Intrinsic motivations → Organizational commitment	0.269***	0.192	0.325	7.975	0.000	
Total effects	0.565***	0.499	0.625	16.692	0.000	

Notes: Critical values *** $P < 0.001$; ** $P < 0.01$; $T > 1.96$
Source: Developed by author

5. Conclusions

5.1 Theoretical implications

The relevant literature that is related to the stakeholder theory, HRM, organizational behavior and/or to organizational psychology suggest that it is in the employers' interest to nurture excellent relationships with their employees (Camilleri, 2019) and to motivate them (Kim *et al.*,

2020; Mitchell *et al.*, 2020), in order to enhance their organizational commitment (Bulut and Culha, 2010; Aguiar-Quintana, *et al.*, 2020).

The proponents of SDT imply that human resources ought to be motivated at all times, to improve their morale, job satisfaction and performance (Ryan and Deci, 2000; Deci *et al.*, 2017; Deci and Ryan, 2020). Employers can utilize rewards and incentives to trigger their employees to engage in productive behaviors. More importantly, they can instill their intrinsic motivations in terms of increasing their sense of personal autonomy, relatedness with their colleagues and by continuously enhancing their competencies for their jobs.

Employees may feel empowered and entrusted if they are delegated with tasks, duties and responsibilities. They will probably appreciate that their employer enhances their competences by offering them ongoing training and development opportunities, and by providing an open organizational culture that encourages teamwork in a harmonious working climate. These intrinsic factors are intended to support the employees' emotive health and psychological well-being (An and Han, 2020; Berezan *et al.*, 2020). As a result, employees could identify themselves with their employers' values, and will be in a better position to achieve their organizational goals.

Moreover, the business ethics literature suggests that employers, including those operating in the hospitality industry sector, should engage in a responsible manner with all of their members of staff (Choi and Choi, 2021; Zhao *et al.*, 2021). They are expected to treat them with dignity and respect, on a day-to-day basis (Kim and Kim, 2021; Leung *et al.*, 2022; Malik *et al.*, 2015). To do so, they have to provide an appropriate working environment with adequate and sufficient conditions of employment for their valued employees (Camilleri, 2022).

In this light, this research shed light on the hospitality employees' perceptions on their employers' human resources management practices and investigated their motivations on their job. The study integrated valid measures from SDT's extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation

(Ryan and Deci, 2000; Ryan and Deci, 2020) with a responsible HRM (Camilleri, 2019; Wong et al., 2021). It hypothesized that these three constructs are exogenous drivers of organizational commitment (Bulut and Culha, 2010).

The empirical results confirm that all set hypotheses of this research were confirmed, and that the proposed structured model is robust, in statistical terms. The causal paths among the four constructs were all highly significant. Notwithstanding, SEM-PLS algorithm corroborated the constructs' reliabilities, validities, as well as their discriminant validities.

The findings indicate that the employers' financial incentives are having the most significant effect on the employees' intrinsic motivations. They also report that extrinsic motivations directly affect organizational commitment. These two results are in stark contrast with mainstream research on this topic, where most researchers indicated that extrinsic factors could undermine the intrinsic motivations of individuals (Derfler-Rozin and Pitesa, 2020). There were other important outcomes that emerge from this study, including the direct effects between intrinsic motivations - organizational commitment; between responsible HRM - organizational commitment as well as between responsible HRM - intrinsic motivations.

Previous studies associated to the stakeholder theory also found that employers were engaging in responsible behaviors with their human resources by promoting equal opportunities when hiring and promoting employees and by providing adequate working conditions among other socially responsible practices), to build better relationships with them, and to foster productive behaviors (Berezan *et al.*, 2020; Kim et al., 2020; Troise and Camilleri, 2021). In this case, this research reveals that the businesses' responsible human resources practices are having a direct effect on their employees' organizational commitment. This finding is consistent with Zhao et al.'s (2020) study, where they confirmed similar statistical results between socially responsible HRM and the employees' organizational citizenship behaviors.

Evidently, the hospitality employers are satisfying their employees' psychological needs of belongingness and relatedness. In fact, the study found that there is a positive and significant effect between responsible HRM and the employees' intrinsic motivations (albeit, to a lower extent than responsible HRM – organizational commitment link). Furthermore, the results report that intrinsic motivations partially mediate the responsible HRM – organizational commitment relationship, as well as extrinsic motivation – organizational commitment causal links.

In sum, this research raises awareness on organizational dispositions that incentivize and reward diligent employees in a commensurate manner. It clarifies that responsible HRM practices can have positive effects on the employees' state of mind, particularly on their intrinsic motivations and commitment to their jobs.

To the best of the authors' knowledge, for the time being, there is no study in academia that recognizes the importance of including a responsible HRM construct when evaluating organizational psychology and employee motivations. This contribution addresses this knowledge gap in the academic literature. It advances a novel conceptual framework that adds value to previous theoretical underpinnings related to SDT and business ethics, in the tourism and hospitality industry context.

5.2 Managerial implications

This contribution raises awareness on responsible organizational behaviors including on the utilization of tangible and intangible extrinsic motivators, in order to enhance the employees' connection and sense of belonging with their employer. It posits that there is scope for hospitality businesses to incentivize their employees to work hard and to reward them for their efforts in a fair and equitable manner. This way, they can instill a sense of purpose in their employees. As a result, the latter will probably increase their commitment to pursue organizational goals.

In the past three years, a large number of hospitality employees have either lost their jobs or experienced significant reductions in their working conditions, including cutbacks from their salaries and wages, in various contexts, due to the decreased demand for hospitality services during COVID-19. In many cases, they were compelled to find better prospects during the pandemic (to improve their intrinsic motivations and job stability).

At the time of writing this article, many hotels are witnessing better occupancy levels and the restaurants are filling up with patrons again, almost reaching pre COVID-19 figures. These latest developments are putting pressure on hospitality firms who are finding it hard to recruit suitable job candidates, who are willing to accept their working conditions (Skift, 2023). Currently, various hotels and restaurants are experiencing skill gaps and skill mismatches, in various contexts, around the globe (ILO, 2023). In the main, the hospitality businesses are not always offering appropriate salaries and wages, particularly if they are recruiting inexperienced employees on a temporary basis (Skift, 2022).

Frequently, the job candidates of this demanding industry are unqualified and unskilled. As a result, they may be willing to accept positions that do not pay enough (to cover their employers' staffing requirements during the high and shoulder seasons). In many cases, such employees are not allowed to join trade unions to protect their rights and conditions of employment. Hence, they cannot be covered by collective agreements that are meant to safeguard their interests.

5.3 Limitations and future research

The data gathering process was carried out in a time when tourism activity started to recover from the stagnation that was brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. A quantitative study was carried out among hospitality employees who were engaged in hotels and restaurants during Spring

2022. The respondents were expected to complete an e-survey questionnaire to participate in this study.

This research confirms that the research participants (who were mostly recruited in administrative and/or executive positions) were valuing their hospitality employers' extrinsic motivations. The researchers noted that there were few respondents that represented low-level employees. They presume that most of the hospitality businesses' members of staff hailing from their operational department including housekeeping, food production and/or from food and beverage services, are not subscribed to the LinkedIn Groups, that were used to disseminate the survey.

This research adapted key constructs that were tried and tested in academia, relating to SDT, organizational commitment and to CSR measuring scales. Future researchers are invited to validate this study in other contexts. They could use the same constructs (and their corresponding items) that are featured in this study. Perhaps, they can examine the relationship between responsible HRM and extrinsic motivations, as this causal path was not tested in this research. Alternatively, they may use other measuring constructs from SDT (e.g. identified motivations and introjected motivations) or from CSR literature to explore responsible organizational behaviors and/or talent management within the hospitality industry settings. They may opt to include additional factors that could examine the employees' job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction, loyalty toward their employer or staff turnover, among others.

Other methodologies and sampling frames may be employed to probe deeper insights into the employees' opinions about the working conditions within the hospitality sector. For example, researchers may conduct inductive studies to investigate this topic in more depth and breadth. Interpretative research can reveal detailed information on the employees' intrinsic motivations and on their sense of relatedness, competence and autonomy in their jobs.

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