

“Are your employees mentally prepared for the pandemic?” Wellbeing-oriented human resource management practices in a developing country

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ABSTRACT

Employees are the most valuable asset of any service business because of its human-centric nature. However, in the crisis situations, the human side in crisis management strategy, particularly in the areas of human resource management is largely overlooked. The present study explores how human resource management (HRM) practices in the pre-crisis stage could build a good foundation of psychological capital (PsyCap) for tourism and hospitality staff to be mentally resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic. Grounded on the conservation of resource (COR) theory, research hypotheses are developed and then empirically tested using a sample of 760 employees in various tourism and hospitality companies. Research outcomes demonstrate that wellbeing-oriented HRM policies (specifically employee development and employee empowerment policies) in the pre-crisis stage increases employee PsyCap during the pandemic, leading to the preservation of their wellbeing. More importantly, employees' family financial burden is found as a moderating factor, altering the influences of HRM policies on employee PsyCap and their in-crisis wellbeing. Therefore, wellbeing-oriented HRM could be part of crisis preparedness strategy for tourism and hospitality businesses as well as crucial element of the internal corporate social responsibility portfolio in tourism and hospitality businesses. In developing countries, where less financial support and fewer job security policies are available during crises than in the developed world, the application of wellbeing-oriented HRM becomes even more critical.

1. Introduction

In crisis situations, most tourism and hospitality companies must immediately apply cost-cutting strategies, with a heavy focus on staff lay-off and reducing working hours (Le and Phi, 2021; Lopes et al., 2021). In addition to job loss/insecurity and income reduction, tourism and hospitality employees often confront with personal losses and health concerns (Bufquin et al., 2021). Thus, the pandemic has adversely impacted on employee wellbeing and caused lots of mental issues for tourism and hospitality workforce including emotional exhaustion, stress, anxiety and even depression (Aguilar-Quintana et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2021).

Employee wellbeing is defined as the presence of positive emotions such as joy and happiness and concomitantly the absence of negative

sentiments such as sadness and anger (Bakker and Oerlemans, 2011). Employee anxiety and negative feelings observed in pandemic situations (Park et al., 2020) are found to negatively influence job performance (Vo-Thanh et al., 2021); willingness to work (Stergiou and Farmaki, 2021); organizational citizenship behavior (Yu et al., 2021); job engagement (Jung et al., 2021) and intention to leave the tourism and hospitality sector (Chen, 2021). Consequently, business recovery can be slowed down or become less successful. Therefore, it is essential to investigate how tourism and hospitality businesses could support employees to maintain wellbeing during crisis situations as part of business recovery strategy.

A considerable volume of research has been conducted to address this contemporary topic. Researchers have found that crisis communication (Tuan, 2021), social support (Chen, 2020), company responses to

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the COVID-19 (Vo-Thanh et al., 2021), corporate social responsibility policies (Mao et al., 2020), trade union support (Vo-Thanh et al., 2021), socially responsible human resource management (HRM) (He et al., 2020) would be necessary and effective to improve employee positive sentiments and organizational trust, and at the same time reduce negative feelings (e.g., anxiety and fear). These studies provided valuable insights into HRM policies to support employee mentality during the crisis response. Previous research finding, however, focus only on the in-crisis stage without sufficient attention to proactive HRM solutions in the pre-crisis stage, a critical weakness of the existing literature on crisis management (Ritchie, 2019). Meanwhile, Agarwal (2021) found that how hotel employees had been treated by their employers in the past influenced employee emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting the importance of HRM practices in crisis planning and preparedness.

Moreover, tourism and hospitality businesses have applied many corporate social responsibilities (CSR) to support local community in dealing with the pandemic (Le and Phi, 2021). However, internal CSR policies have not received enough academic attention. Meanwhile, tourism and hospitality employees in developing countries (e.g., Vietnam) would suffer more from the COVID-19 pandemic due to limited government support compared to counterparts in developed countries and the lack of a well-established social welfare system. For example, Vietnamese government has provided a modest subsidy ranging from 1.8 to 3.3 million Vietnam Dong (equivalent to US\$70–US\$133) to employment-contracted labors, who lost jobs due to the pandemic (Vietnam Government, 2021). Meanwhile, many employees in hotels and restaurants are employed on a casual basis, which exclude them from the above support payment. An absence of a formal contracted job also eliminates tourism and hospitality employees from access to superannuation and income protection, according to the Vietnam Law of Labour (International Labour Organization, 2020). The exclusion from the social welfare system, coupled with insufficient government support from job losses make tourism and hospitality employees in Vietnam, particularly those bearing financial burden from dependents (for instance, children or elderly relatives) more mentally vulnerable to the pandemic. Therefore, this study tries to explore the possibilities of using HRM policies as part of internal CSR portfolio in order to provide better care for the most vulnerable employee groups who are at a greater risk of impaired wellbeing during a crisis.

Against this background, the current research aims to fill these critical knowledge gaps in the literature by exploring how HRM practices in the pre-crisis stage could help employees to be more mentally resilient in crisis situations. Furthermore, the study elaborates how the family financial burdens of tourism and hospitality employees in a developing country could alter the impact of pre-crisis HRM policies on employee wellbeing during the in-crisis stage. The paper's contributions to the literature are threefold. First, it highlights the role of HRM in business crisis preparedness, grounded on the conservation of resource (COR) theory. Second, it contributes to extend the current HRM literature in the tourism and hospitality sector by clarifying that PsyCap is the underlying mechanism that endures the positive impact of wellbeing-oriented HRM practices on crisis management by strengthening employee wellbeing in crisis conditions. Third, it points out the necessity of providing more support for employees with dependents, arguing a focus on the internal CSR practices in the HRM policies of tourism and hospitality businesses in developing countries.

The rest of the paper is structured as follows. In the literature review section, a theoretical foundation to develop the conceptual framework and research hypotheses is presented. Details of data collection and analysis are provided in the Section 3, demonstrating how (1) the sample of 760 employees in tourism and hospitality businesses was recruited and (2) analysis tools (SPSS and AMOS) were employed to test the proposed model. Then, research findings are presented and interpreted to support or reject research hypotheses. Finally, theoretical contributions and practical implications to tourism and hospitality

businesses are elaborated. The paper is concluded by stating the research's limitations and indicating agenda for future research.

2. Theoretical background and research model

2.1. Wellbeing-oriented HRM

There is a growing attention on employee wellbeing in the HRM literature. In the conventional HRM models driven by high-performance, high-involvement, or high-commitment work systems, a firm's performance outcomes are sometimes at the expense of work intensification, employee burnout, stress and other unexpected outcomes on employee wellbeing (Jensen et al., 2013; Peccei et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2013). Meanwhile, numerous evidence shows that poor employee wellbeing at work could result in unfavorable impacts on organizational performance and work productivity (Kowalski and Loretto, 2017). Attempts to project firms' performance from HRM practices without considering the interference of employee wellbeing to the process often incur shortcomings (Ho and Kuvaas, 2019). Accordingly, there is an increasing interest on HRM perspectives that advocate for employee wellbeing-oriented models. Within the tenet of wellbeing-oriented HRM models, the significance of HRM on employee wellbeing is equally important to the conventional, central links of HRM and organizational performance for the attainment of mutual gains for both employees and organizations. Furthermore, in wellbeing-oriented HRM models, employee wellbeing is considered as a kind of personnel investment outputs, at the individual level. Owing to these attributes, wellbeing-oriented HRM perspective is plausible for this study, proposing a HRM framework for the preparedness of employee mentality to deal with workforce-affecting uncertainties.

Wellbeing-oriented HRM practices are either manifest in emerging mutual-gain HRM strategies or implied in components of coherent HRM systems. The study of Guest (2017) has been echoed as an initial effort identifying the attributes of a wellbeing-oriented HRM model for mutual benefits. In particular, the practices on training and development, learning opportunities, information sharing, employee voices in an organization represent the central priority for employees in business HRM (Cooper et al., 2019; Guest, 2017). Salas-Vallina et al., (2020, p.562) contest the inclusion of "enriching, strengthening, empowering and connecting practices" in wellbeing-oriented HRM practices and label these practices as wellbeing-oriented management. Lin et al. (2019) interrogate the two HR bundles, i.e., development and maintenance in mutual-gain HRM strategies. Meanwhile, Ogbonnaya and Messersmith (2019) examine the alignment of opportunity-enhancing HRM practices, including teamwork and job autonomy, in the full HRM system to promote mutual gains. Based on the above conceptual foundations, there are increasing number of empirical studies examining how these models can produce best possible outcomes of improved employee resilience, employee performance at workplace, and innovative work behavior (see Cooper et al., 2019; Lin et al., 2019; Salas-Vallina et al., 2020).

The HRM literature in the tourism and hospitality industry is recently proliferated with studies on employee wellbeing outcomes coupled with organizational effects from HR interventions. The participation to CSR activities and its positive impacts on frontline employees' wellbeing (Hu et al., 2019); HRM practices during the COVID-19 and the wellbeing of hotel employees (Agarwal, 2021); the impact of high-performance work systems on protecting the attitudes and wellbeing of hospitality workers (Teo et al., 2020) are names of the few. These discourses highlight an increasing attention to employee wellbeing as a driver for the successful lifecycle of tourism and hospitality organizations. However, the wellbeing-oriented approach in HRM practices is yet to be tested in the tourism and hospitality sector.

2.2. Wellbeing-oriented HRM practices experienced in the pre-crisis stage and employee wellbeing during the pandemic

The relationship between wellbeing-oriented HRM practices experienced by tourism and hospitality employees in the pre-crisis stage and their wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic are investigated through a positive psychology lens. Psychological capital (PsyCap) refers to a measurable, malleable resource that concerns about “who you are” and “who are you becoming” (Luthans et al., 2004). The evolution of PsyCap in HRM debates stems from organizational endeavors to attain sustainable competitive advantages for businesses (Luthans, Youssef, and Avolio, 2007). Under this management paradigm, traditional resources, such as physical, financial or technological, become insufficient and human-related capital, especially PsyCap, is prioritized. PsyCap, as defined by Luthans et al. (2007, p.3), is “an individual’s positive psychological state of development and is characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward goals and, when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, sustaining and bouncing back and even beyond (resiliency) to attain success”. PsyCap is proven to contribute significantly to employee morale, job satisfaction, turnover intention, organizational commitment and other organizational performance outputs (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, and Mhatre, 2011; Newman et al., 2014). In the tourism and hospitality sector, recent empirical studies highlight the positive contribution of PsyCap on individual-levelled and performance-related outcomes, such as service recovery performance, turnover intentions, employee morale, work engagement (Kim et al., 2017; Paek et al., 2015).

The involvement of PsyCap to the relationship of wellbeing-oriented HRM practices and employee wellbeing is explained by the conservation of resource (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). The COR theory considers resources in an integrated association with wellbeing and regards resource constructs consisting of multiple components (Hobfoll, 2002). The COR perspective argues that (a) resources can be obtained, retained and protected; (b) resources are sociocultural-centric (c) the possession of reliable resource reservoirs is crucial for maintaining wellbeing (Hobfoll, 2002).

Under the COR theory, PsyCap can be functioned as a reservoir, heightening personal resources accumulated from perceived HRM practices, and is activated to preserve employee wellbeing in the event of workforce-affecting crises. For two reasons we assume this capacity of PsyCap. First, it stems from the characteristics of PsyCap. Avey (2014) synthesizes the characteristics of PsyCap, including multi-dimensional, stable, self-opinion operationalized, measurable, predictive of performance, and multi-level analyzed. Owing to these attributes, particularly the malleable, state-like capacity, employees’ PsyCap can be developed through wellbeing-oriented HRM policies at workplace such as the practices on training and development, learning opportunities, information sharing, employee voices (Luthans et al., 2010; Newman et al., 2014). Second, there is mounting evidence for a positive link between PsyCap and employee wellbeing. In their study testing the impact of PsyCap on employee wellbeing overtime, Avey et al. (2010) postulate PsyCap as a secondary resource that is capable of preserving primary resource i.e., employee wellbeing. Indeed, Luthans et al. (2007) prefer to refer PsyCap as psychological capacities rather than resources. These authors contend that self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience capacities of PsyCap allow employees to capitalize on these resources, synergize them and gain developments. Among the resources developed from the attainment of PsyCap and its sub-components, wellbeing is reiterated (see Kim et al., 2017; Nguyen and Nguyen, 2012).

Based on the above interpretation and the previous works on the topic, we assume that wellbeing-oriented HRM practiced in the pre-crisis stage and experienced by tourism and hospitality employees influence the preservation of these employees’ wellbeing during

workforce-affecting crisis events. Such potential is facilitated through employee PsyCap, which is gained and stabilized by tourism and hospitality employees as the work-related capacities. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed to test this assumption. Based on this testing, the possibility of wellbeing-oriented HRM practices to facilitate the readiness of tourism and hospitality employees’ mentality towards workforce-affecting crises is explored.

Hypothesis 1. Employee PsyCap mediates the relationship between wellbeing-oriented HRM practices experienced in the pre-crisis stage and employee wellbeing during the pandemic.

2.3. Employees’ family financial burden and its impact on the HRM-employee wellbeing linkage

Discussions on HRM policies and employee wellbeing often focus on family demands that might conflict with employee performance and affect their wellbeing (Butts et al., 2013; Ma et al., 2020). Among these family demands, dependent burden or work-family conflict have been identified as varying the wellbeing of tourism and hospitality workers in response to work pressure (Fredriksen and Scharlach, 1999; Grant-Vallone and Donaldson, 2001; Neal and Hammer, 2017) or organizational support policies (Moen et al., 2016).

Family financial burden is considered to alter the nuance of pre-crisis HRM practices experienced by tourism and hospitality staff and their in-crisis wellbeing within the COVID-19 pandemic from a developing country context (Agarwal, 2021). Obviously, the financial resources of tourism and hospitality employees has been hardly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, which in turn affecting their wellbeing during the crisis (Karsavuran, 2021; Wilkesmann and Wilkesmann, 2021). The scarce of governmental supports and social welfare ineligibility status in developing countries like Vietnam significantly influence the financial distress of tourism and hospitality employees, the severe of which is dependent on employees’ financial responsibilities for dependents (Hoang, Truong, and Nguyen, 2021).

In addition, family financial burden perceived by Asian staff in general, and Vietnamese employees in particular is culturally embedded (Nguyen, Dang, and Nguyen, 2015; Zhu, Warner, and Rowley, 2007). Family caring responsibilities in the Vietnamese culture is strongly influence by filial piety and familism traditions (Khuu, 2017). These cultural trails strengthen family bonds on the one hand and place more moral pressure on employees to financially care their family members on the other hand. Furthermore, Vietnamese people consider immediate family built from both marriage and blood relationships (Tho et al., 2018). Accordingly, a family unit might include three to four generations, ranging from grandparents to parents and children. Thus, employee dependents might not limit to their kids but also their elderly relatives.

Therefore, in this study, we propose that family financial burden alters the linkage of HRM practices experienced in the pre-crisis stage and employees’ in-crisis wellbeing. The family financial burden is indicated by employee’ dependent status, from which two groups of employees (i.e., with and without dependents) are identified and analyzed. Specifically, the linkage level between experienced wellbeing-oriented HRM practices and employee PsyCap attainment, and consequently, the influence degree of gained PsyCap resources on the wellbeing of tourism and hospitality employees during the pandemic, can be different between these two groups. This proposal is presented in the following hypothesis (Fig. 1).

Hypothesis 2. Family financial burden is a moderating factor that reduces (a) the impact of wellbeing-oriented HRM practices on employees’ PsyCap in the pre-crisis stage and (b) the impact of employee PsyCap on employee wellbeing during the pandemic.

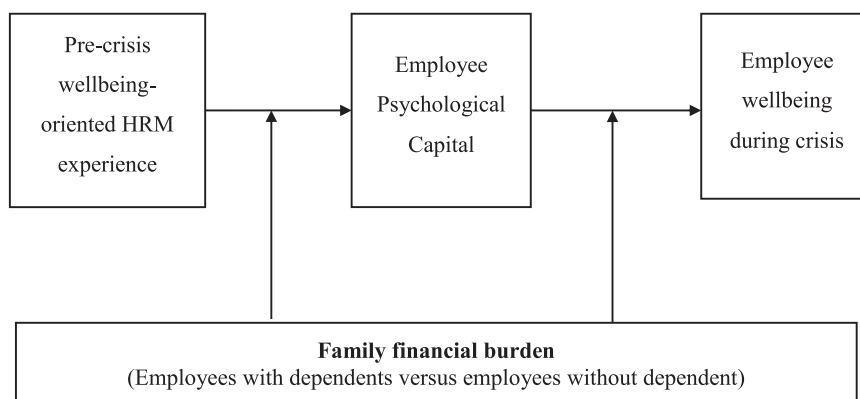


Fig. 1. The proposed conceptual framework.

3. Methodology

3.1. Measures

The questionnaire items were based on scales developed in the literature and adapted for this context. All items for each question were measured on a five-point scale, from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (5). Wellbeing-oriented HRM practices were measured using the scale adapted from Guest (2017). In his conceptual paper, Guest (2017) argues for the articulation of an HRM framework orientated towards enhancing employee wellbeing. This framework is designed to promote investment in employees (through recruitment, selection, training, development, mentoring and career support), providing engaging work (via job design, information provision and feedback, and skill utilization), offering positive social and physical environment (e.g. health and safety priority, equal opportunities, zero tolerance for bullying and harassment, varied social interactions, fair rewards and high payment, and employment security), empowering employees’ voice (e.g. mutual communication, employee surveys, and collective representation), and organizational support (participatory management, involvement climate, flexible work arrangements, and developmental performance management).

The wellbeing-oriented HRM practices of Guest (2017) provide a baseline for a number of empirical studies in the field, such as Cooper et al. (2019), Ho and Kuvaas (2019), Salas-Vallina et al. (2020). In this study, the proposed wellbeing-oriented HRM framework of Guest (2017) is used as an input to the wellbeing-oriented HRM model that positively influences the preservation of tourism and hospitality employees’ wellbeing during crisis events. PsyCap was measured using the instrument developed by Luthans et al. (2007). This instrument measures PsyCap via 24 items, grouped in four latent constructs, namely self-efficacy, optimism, hope and resilience. The psychological wellbeing scale developed by Grossi et al. (2006) was used to measure employee wellbeing in this study. This measure is widely validated and demonstrates a consistent model fit to measure employee wellbeing in the tourism and hospitality sector (e.g. Hsu et al., 2019; Lu et al., 2016). The scale consists of two positive, and four negative wellbeing items. Examples of positive and negative feelings are “I was emotionally stable and sure of myself during the past month.” versus “I felt downhearted and blue during the past month.”.

3.2. Data collection

Our research sample was employees working across the tourism and hospitality sector in Vietnam. The Vietnamese tourism and hospitality business has been growing rapidly and becoming a driving force for economic development and creating employment for residents in many areas (Vo-Thanh et al., 2021). The dynamic complexity of this sector is a

rich context for this study to investigate the impacts of wellbeing-oriented HRM practices to employee’s wellbeing during the pandemic crisis. Especially, the selection of Vietnam as a data collection context extended the understanding of the research issue in a developing country where the voice of employees is under researched (Teo et al., 2020).

The targeted respondents were non-English speakers, comprising employees and managers working across tourism and hospitality businesses. Convenient sampling method was employed to approach a large sample size to increase the reliability of data collection (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Data collection was conducted using an online survey tool Qualtrics in April 2020. All items of the questionnaire were translated into Vietnamese using the translation and back-translation procedure designed by Brislin (1970). The research team, who are bilingual in English and Vietnamese, translated the English items into Vietnamese and compared with the original version to ensure the translated version of the questionnaire was correctly interpreted. Both original and Vietnamese versions were then sent to an experienced HR manager for feedback on the translation quality and non-academic readability. Finally, a pilot test was carried on a group of 15 Vietnamese participants to test the survey’s clarity and questionnaire flow. All these steps were conducted robustly to ensure that the questionnaire was accessible and understandable for participants with diversity of backgrounds. Also, it helped to avoid research methods biases which could negatively influence the quality of data (Podsakoff et al., 2012).

The survey link was sent to the general managers or senior HR managers of hotels, resorts, travel agencies, tour operators, and destination sites through the HR association. Participants were asked to finish the survey as well as to distribute the survey link to their colleagues or staff members. In total, 844 complete questionnaires were recorded, and 760 questionnaires were included for further analysis after data cleaning and quality control processes. The profile of the selected respondents is provided in Table 1 below.

4. Results

SPSS version 25 and AMOS version 25 were used to analyze the data collected. Normality tests showed that all items were normally distributed (Zskewness < 3 and Zkurtosis < 3) (Yap and Sim, 2011). The research model evaluation using SPSS and AMOS software was carried out in two phases (1) testing the validity and reliability of the measurement model and (2) evaluating the structural model. Descriptive analysis of measurement items is provided in the Appendix 1. Before further analysis, common method bias was tested using the most common statistical approach - Harman’s one factor test (Fuller et al., 2016). First, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) using SPSS showed that one factor can only explain 26.8 % of the total variance in the whole dataset, below the clear-cut of 50 %. Second, CFA using AMOS with one common

Table 1
Profile of survey respondents.

	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
18–25 years old	242	31.84
25–34 years old	407	53.55
35–44 years old	99	13.03
Over 45 years old	12	1.58
Gender		
Male	283	37.24
Female	471	61.97
Others	6	0.79
Business areas		
Accommodation business (hotels, resorts, etc.)	393	51.7
F&B business (restaurants, coffee shops)	41	5.5
Tour company or travel agency	191	25.3
Other tourism and hospitality business (theme parks, entertainment attractions, etc.)	130	17.2
Working experience		
Under a year	204	26.84
1–3 years	318	41.84
3–5 years	79	10.39
Over 5 years	159	20.92
Position		
Employee	500	65.79
Group leader	145	19.08
Department manager	84	11.05
Director	31	4.08
Dependent burden		
With dependent	444	58.42
Without dependent	316	41.58

factor measured by all included items resulted in unfit indexes: ($X^2/df = 12.929$, $RMSEA = 0.125$, $CFI = 0.591$, $NFI = 0.572$, $TLI = 0.558$, and $SRMR = 0.163$). Both tests suggested that the dataset must not have potential problems with common method variance.

4.1. Measurement model testing

In the first phase, the whole dataset was randomly split into two samples (calibration and validation samples): a calibration sample - the first half of respondents ($n = 409$) used to run EFA with SPSS and a validation sample - the second half of respondents ($n = 351$) used to run confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) through the measurement model by AMOS. This process is necessary to verify the validity of measurement scales in a new context (Byrne, 2016). EFA resulted in eight factors, including employee empowerment (5 items, $\alpha = 0.863$), employee development (4 items, $\alpha = 0.890$), Self-efficacy (5 items, $\alpha = 0.847$), Hope (3 items, $\alpha = 0.824$), Resilience (3 items, $\alpha = 0.792$), Optimism (3 items, $\alpha = 0.804$), Positive emotions (2 items, $\alpha = 0.740$) and Negative emotions (3 items, $\alpha = 0.855$). Items with factor loadings under 0.5 were deleted to ensure the convergent validity of measured constructs (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham, 1998). Eight factors explained 62.4 % of total variance ($X^2 = 1093.513$, $df = 457$, $p = 0.000$). CFA using the validation sample ($n = 351$) provided supportive evidence for the validity and reliability of the measurement model ($X^2/df = 2.385$, $RMSEA = 0.043$, $CFI = 0.954$, $NFI = 0.923$, $TLI = 0.946$, and $SRMR = 0.034$). Convergent validity of all constructs was verified by significant factor loadings, maxR(H), average variance extracted (AVE) scores and composite R (see Table 2). The square root of AVE of each reflective construct is higher than its highest correlations with other constructs, indicating good discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) (See Table 3).

4.2. Structural model evaluation

4.2.1. HRM-PsyCap-Employee wellbeing model

The whole sample ($n = 760$) was used to run the structural model. Prior to test research hypotheses, a second-order CFA for PsyCap was

Table 2
Convergent validity of measured constructs.

Factor	Standardized loadings	CR	AVE	MSV	Maxr (H)
Employee empowerment					
EE1 - There are flexible and family-friendly work arrangements at my company.	0.738		0.848	0.527	0.521
EE2 - I am supported for my involvements to the company.	0.758				0.851
EE3 - The participative/ supportive management strategies have been practiced at my workplace.	0.792				
EE4 - There are employee surveys conducted at interval times.	0.697				
EE5 - The extensive two-way communication has been practiced at my workplace.	0.760				
Employee development					
ED1 - I am provided with adequate information provision and feedback.	0.761	0.846	0.580	0.521	0.848
ED2 - I have received adequate mentoring and career support.	0.762				
ED3 - I have received adequate training and development.	0.762				
ED4 - My skills have been utilized satisfactorily at work.	0.776				
Self-efficacy					
SE1 - I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution.	0.754	0.856	0.545	0.411	0.862
SE2 - I feel confident presenting my work area in meetings with management.	0.766				
SE3 - I feel confident contributing to discussions about my hotel's strategy.	0.732				
SE4 - I feel confident helping to set targets/ goals in my work area.	0.703				
SE5 - I feel confident contacting people outside my hotel (e.g., customers) to discuss problems	0.675				
Hope					
H1 - At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals.	0.757	0.822	0.607	0.411	0.823
H2 - There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now.	0.804				
H3 - I can think of many ways to reach my current goals.	0.783				
Optimism					
O1 - I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job.	0.789	0.798	0.569	0.354	0.802
O2 - I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work.	0.793				

(continued on next page)

Table 2 (continued)

Factor	Standardized loadings	CR	AVE	MSV	Maxr (H)
O3 - I approach my job as if every cloud has a silver lining.	0.764				
Resilience		0.776	0.538	0.411	0.794
R1 - I can be “on my own,” so to speak, at work if I have to.	0.658				
R2 - I usually take stressful things at work in my stride.	0.828				
R3 - I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulties before.	0.754				
Positive wellbeing		0.757	0.609	0.171	0.764
PW1 - I felt cheerful, light-hearted during the past month.	0.789				
PW2 - I was emotionally stable and sure of myself during the past month.	0.745				
Negative wellbeing		0.871	0.694	0.171	0.894
NW1 - I felt tired, worn out, used up, or exhausted during the past month.	0.760				
NW2 - I felt downhearted and blue during the past month.	0.920				
NW3 - I felt nervous during the past month.	0.772				

checked and resulted in excellent model fit indexes ($X^2/df = 2.602$, RMSEA = 0.046, CFI = 0.975, NFI = 0.961, TLI = 0.969 and SRMR = 0.318). Then, estimated SEM (see Fig. 2) has good model fit indexes ($X^2/df = 2.531$, RMSEA = 0.045, CFI = 0.949, NFI = 0.918, TLI = 0.943 and SRMR = 0.048). Both employee-empowerment ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$) and employee-development policies ($\beta = 0.59$, $p < 0.01$) significantly improves employees’ PsyCap. In turns, employees’ PsyCap increases employees’ positive emotions ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$) and decreases negative emotions ($\beta = -0.19$, $p < 0.01$). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported.

4.2.2. Moderating effects of family financial burdens on linkages of HRM-PsyCap and PsyCap-Employee wellbeing

Hypothesis 2 postulated that the impact of pre-crisis HRM practices on PsyCap and the effects of PsyCap on employee wellbeing would vary by family financial burden (employees with dependents versus employee without dependents). The analysis of moderating effects are based on X^2 test by comparing the baseline (unconstrained) model and the constrained model (Jung et al., 2021; Byrne, 2016). First, measurement invariance related to family financial burden between group 1 (employees with dependents) and group 2 (employees without dependents) was checked and results are provided in Table 4 below:

To verify the moderating effects of family financial burden (Hypothesis 2), the differences between group 1 (employees with dependents) and group 2 (employees without dependents) were tested using the multi-group analysis function in IBM AMOS version 25. The sample was quite balanced between group 1 ($n = 444$) and group 2 ($n = 316$). The baseline (unconstrained) model achieves a good overall fit indexes ($/df = 2.008$, RMSEA = 0.036, CFI = 0.933, NFI = 0.876, TLI = 0.926 and SRMR = 0.058). In comparison with the baseline model, the results indicate invariance in measurement weights ($\Delta X^2 = 24.622$, $df = 23$, $p = 0.370$). Given that two groups were different at the

Table 3
Discriminant validity of measured constructs (Fornell and Lacker Criterion).

Employee empowerment	Self-efficacy	Negative wellbeing	Optimism	Positive wellbeing	Resilience	Hope	Employee development
Employee empowerment	0.726						
Self-efficacy	0.444	0.738					
Negative emotions	-0.224	-0.120	0.833				
Optimism	0.507	0.443	-0.223	0.755			
Positive emotions	-0.266	-0.230	0.414	-0.260	0.780		
Resilience	0.361	0.503	-0.116	0.498	-0.274	0.734	
Hope	0.490	0.641	-0.156	0.595	-0.229	0.641	0.779
Employee development	0.722	0.492	-0.142	0.594	-0.169	0.405	0.561

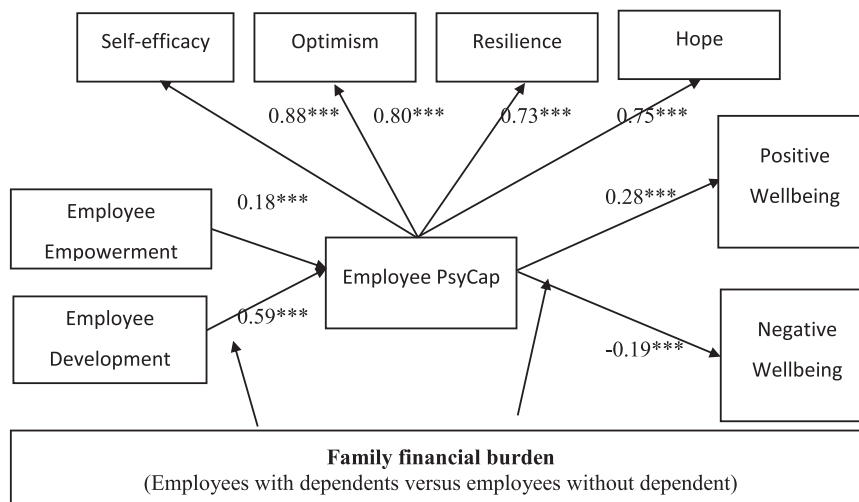


Fig. 2. Results of SEM by AMOS.

Table 4
Comparison of model fit indices.

	Model	X ²	df	CFI	RMSEA	RMR	
Family financial burden	Baseline (unconstrained) model	1369.5	682	0.933	0.036	0.049	ΔX ² = 24.622 (Δdf = 20; p = 0.37) ^a
	Measurement model	1394.1	702	0.933	0.036	0.049	

^a Non-significant (p > 0.05).

structural covariances model (ΔX² = 37.011, df = 27, p = 0.095 < 0.1), path differences were checked (Byrne, 2016). Table 3 shows the results of testing causal path invariance.

As can be seen from Table 5, Hypothesis 2 is partly supported. The path coefficient from Employee empowerment to PsyCap and from PsyCap to Negative wellbeing are not significantly variant between the two groups. The path coefficient from Employee development to PsyCap for the employee group without dependents (β = 0.614**) is much higher than that for the group with dependents (β = 0.491**). Also, the path coefficient from PsyCap to Positive emotions for the employee group without dependents (β = 0.396**) is superior to that for the group with dependents (β = 0.201**). The results indicated that dependent burden might reduce the effectiveness of employee oriented HRM in improving employees' PsyCap and their positive emotions during crisis.

5. Discussion and conclusions

This study contributes to the current discussion on wellbeing-oriented HRM and its strategic function in CSR enhancement and crisis management. Using the sample from various tourism and hospitality enterprises in a developing country, it demonstrates how various wellbeing-oriented HRM policies that companies apply in “normal business” conditions build up employees' psychological capital. In turns, employees' PsyCap protects employee wellbeing during the pandemic. In developing countries like Vietnam where the functions of union are relatively weak, multinational companies are leading the labor market by applying progressive HR practices in accordance with international standards. This forces local companies to improve their HRM (Nguyen et al., 2018). Therefore, research outcomes are critical meaningful to encourage HR managers in developing countries to shift their mindset toward a more sustainable and responsible HRM approach.

5.1. Theoretical contributions

5.1.1. Wellbeing-oriented HR practices as a resource for employees to have their wellbeing preserved during employment-affecting crisis vents

The impact canopy of HRM practices on wide ranges of business management is increasingly extended. For example, the relationship between human resources and service quality, customer satisfaction and

loyalty, competitive advantage and organizational performance is compelling (Kushuvan et al., 2010). The current research provides empirical evidence to justify benefits of the wellbeing-oriented HRM model in crisis preparedness for tourism and hospitality businesses. Two pillars of the wellbeing-oriented HRM framework (i.e., employee empowerment and employee development) have positive influences on employee PsyCap, forming employees' mental strength to maintain their wellbeing during crisis situations. Hence, this study joins current discussions on a strategic role of HRM in business crisis readiness (De Sisto et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2009).

Employee development policies have major impacts on employee PsyCap (β = 0.59, p < 0.01), suggesting the necessity of designing suitable employee development policies in pre-crisis conditions. Our finding aligns with other studies in supporting HRM investments for employee capacity building. Tourism firms have traditionally valued personnel training and development to provide employees with work-related skills, learnings and knowledge to better adapt current and future roles (Nolan et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2017). There is numerous robust evidence indicating that appropriate employee development investments result in better work performance, improve organizational citizenship behavior, enhance job satisfactions and affective commitment and reduce intention to leave among recipient employees (Kuvaas and Dysvik, 2009; Lee and Bruvold, 2003). The current research highlights the additional impact of employee development policies in strengthening employee psychological capital, and consequently preserving employee wellbeing in crisis situations. The research concurs with and extends the emerging discourses on the interface of personnel development and tourism business crisis readiness (Pffor and Hosie, 2008; Prayag, 2018; Ritchie and Jiang, 2019; Wang et al., 2009).

Employee empowerment-focusing practices have less influential but still significant impacts on employees' PsyCap, which in turn positively impact employee wellbeing during the pandemic. Employee empowerment policies have been found to positively influence work engagements, strengthen employees' levels of interpersonal trust in their managers, reduce employee withdrawal behavior such as lateness, absenteeism, and turnover intentions (Kim and Beehr, 2020; Moye and Henkin, 2006; Zhang et al., 2018). In service-centric and high contact industries such as the tourism and hospitality sector, empowered staff is argued to yield positive influences on customer service quality (Gazzoli

Table 5
Moderating effects of dependent burden.

	Employee with dependent (n = 444)	Employee without dependent (n = 316)	Unconstrained model X ²	Constrained model X ²	ΔX ² test (Δdf = 1)	Invariant	Results
H2 a: Employee Empowerment-> PsyCap	β = 0.189** t-value = 2.622	β = 0.172** t-value = 1.730	1369.5	1369.6	0.58 ^{ns}	No	Hypothesis 2a is partly supported
H2 a: Employee Development-> PsyCap	β = 0.491** t-value = 6.929	β = 0.614** t-value = 8.926	1369.5	1371.4	1.96*	Yes	
H2 b: PsyCap-> Positive emotions	β = 0.201** t-value = 3.235	β = 0.396** t-value = 5.421	1369.5	1372.8*	3.30*	Yes	Hypothesis 2b is partly supported
H2 b: PsyCap-> Negative emotions	β = - 0.151** t-value = - 2.746	β = - 0.219** t-value = - 3.087	1369.5	1370.1	0.61 ^{ns}	No	

* Significant at p < 0.05.

^{ns} Non-significant (p > 0.05).

et al., 2010; Lashley, 1995; Lin et al., 2017), organizational marketing capacities (King, So, DiPietro, and Grace, 2020). Also, linkages between employee empowerment and job satisfaction are also well studied in the hospitality specifically (Al-Ababneh et al., 2017; Pelit et al., 2011). This study extends current knowledge on the benefits of employee empowerment policies by providing further support for strategically applying empowerment policies in tourism and hospitality companies as part of business crisis management.

5.1.2. *PsyCap as the underlying mechanism for the relationship of pre-crisis HRM experience and employees' in-crisis wellbeing*

Evidence on the role of PsyCap in various employment interventions in the tourism and hospitality is burgeoning. PsyCap alleviates the negative impact of challenge and hindrance stressors on interpersonal citizenship behaviors of hotel employees (Khliefat et al., 2021). This personal capacity partly influences the relationship of service climate and quality of work life among hotel employees (Kang et al., 2018). PsyCap is identified as a mediator to the effects of authentic leadership and transformational leadership on follower service innovation behavior in frontline employees (Schuckert et al., 2018); the effect of servant leadership on the service-oriented organizational citizenship behaviors of hotel salespeople (Bouzari and Karatepe, 2017); the effect of shared leadership and organizational commitment and creativity (Wu and Chen, 2018).

In the present study, the role of PsyCap in the HRM literature in the tourism and hospitality sector is extended. PsyCap is identified as the underlying mechanism for the relationship of HRM practices experienced in the pre-crisis stage and employees' in-crisis wellbeing. Both employee-empowerment ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$) and employee-development policies ($\beta = 0.59$, $p < 0.01$) experienced by tourism and hospitality employees during the pre-crisis stage significantly improves employees' PsyCap, which in turns, increases employees' positive emotions ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.01$) and decreases negative emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, employee PsyCap endures the positive impact of wellbeing-oriented HRM practices experienced in normal business conditions to the preservation of employee wellbeing during crisis conditions. This finding contributes to elaborate the process involved in the relationship of HRM practices and employee wellbeing, the domain where the ambiguity often emerges (Kowalski and Loretto, 2017).

5.2. *Practical implications*

The tourism system in the post-crisis era is gradually unfold, of which inclusiveness, altruism, and sustainability are resounded and the business resilience to uncertainties becomes essential (BCG, 2020; Gössling et al., 2020; McKinsey and Company, 2020). In response to these systemic changes, tourism businesses have to re-design their organizational business model. This paper provides tourism and hospitality businesses with a convincing evidence on why they should consider the wellbeing-oriented HRM framework to build a more resilient workforce to uncertainties. Based on the research findings in this study, we suggest that applications of the wellbeing-oriented HRM model can help tourism businesses sustain their employee wellbeing through employee development and empowerment practices at work. In particular, managers should prioritize on employee development policies, such as employee performance review and feedback, interval training and development opportunities in place. Employee empowerment strategies should also

be considered, including flexible work schedules, work-family supports, two-way communications. Due to the significant impacts of wellbeing-oriented HRM, business managers may want to adopt and sustain these progressive practices as a strategic and long-term CSR commitment.

The research findings in this study also indicate that employees with dependents, compared to peers without dependents, have their wellbeing relatively more vulnerable towards employment-affecting events. It is found that employee development policies have less influences on the PsyCap of employees with dependents and the PsyCap also has less influential impact on their wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic (see Table 4). This is typical case of a developing country where social welfare system has not been fully developed and government support for tourism and hospitality employees during the pandemic is limited. To this case, financial and non-financial support from their employers become crucial to diminish employees' family financial burden (Premeaux and Breaux, 2007). Therefore, tourism and hospitality managers should practice a moral viewpoint where possible while making employment decisions. This practice could be undertaken, for example, by incorporating internal corporate social responsibility (CSR), i.e. "the policy and practices of an organization that are related to the psychological and physiological wellbeing of its employees" (Hameed et al., 2016, p. 2) to their HRM practices. Tourism and hospitality businesses can differentiate employment practices based on employees' dependent status and family financial burden and include this bespoke employment model in their international CSR portfolio (Baum, 2019; Collings, 2017).

5.3. *Limitations and agenda for future research*

The risk vulnerability of tourism and hospitality organizations, the precarity nature of this industry, the COVID-19 pandemic, family financial burden, and the limited social welfare resources from a developing country delimit the research outcomes of this study. Further studies in other national backgrounds and different crisis situations and uncertainty events can refine the impact of the wellbeing-oriented HRM model in business crisis management. In particular, it is worthy to compare the effectiveness of wellbeing-oriented HRM model in business crisis readiness between developed and developing country settings. This research would strengthen the cross-contextual significance of the model among tourism businesses. Moreover, the organizational outcomes from this mutual-gain HRM model in the tourism sector are not examined in the present study. This limitation indicates an agenda for future research on the topic. For instance, empirical studies focusing on the linkage of employee empowerment and employee development practices in the pre-crisis stage and the business recovery effectiveness as well as employee affective commitment to the organization in the post-crisis stage are valuable. Finally, future research on the role of HRM in crisis responses is necessary to examine which HRM approach and practices enhance the effectiveness of crisis management in the labor-intensive tourism and hospitality sector. The agile HRM (McMackin and Heffernan, 2021) has recently gained lots of academic interest and could provide interesting guidance for the next evolution of HR operating models.

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Appendix 1. Outcomes of descriptive analysis

Descriptive statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender	760	1	3	1.64	.498
Age	760	1	4	1.84	.699
Status.Dependent	760	1	2	1.42	.493
WORK_EX	760	1	4	2.72	1.127
Area	756	1	4	2.08	1.207
Position	760	1	4	1.53	.846
SelfEfficacy1	760	1	5	3.91	.813
SelfEfficacy2	760	1	5	3.94	.777
SelfEfficacy3	760	1	5	3.77	.813
SelfEfficacy4	760	1	5	4.09	.812
SelfEfficacy5	760	1	5	3.99	.833
Hope1	760	1	5	4.07	.751
Hope2	760	1	5	4.02	.742
Hope3	760	1	5	3.96	.766
Optimism1	760	1	5	4.00	.803
Optimism2	760	1	5	3.88	.814
Optimism3	760	1	5	4.00	.818
Resilience1	760	1	5	3.64	.810
Resilience2	760	1	5	3.87	.763
Resilience3	760	1	5	3.67	.811
EM_DEVELOPMENT1	760	1	5	3.90	.856
EM_DEVELOPMENT2	760	1	5	3.77	.841
EM_DEVELOPMENT3	760	1	5	3.82	.769
EM_DEVELOPMENT4	760	1	5	3.86	.728
EM_EMPOWERMENT1	760	1	5	3.75	.808
EM_EMPOWERMENT2	760	1	5	3.66	.933
EM_EMPOWERMENT3	760	1	5	3.81	.808
EM_EMPOWERMENT4	760	1	5	3.93	.793
EM_EMPOWERMENT5	760	1	5	3.74	.833
POS_WELLB1	760	1.00	5.00	2.6329	1.14472
POS_WELLB2	760	1.00	5.00	2.5289	1.07882
NEG_WELLB1	760	1	5	3.06	.921
NEG_WELLB2	760	1	5	2.27	1.045
NEG_WELLB3	760	1	5	2.06	1.004

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