Research Article

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High performance work practices at restaurant work

Abstract: This study focuses on human resource management (HRM) and high performance work practices in small restaurants. Empirical material is collected through interviews aimed at individuals working in the restaurant industry. In the first phase of this study in 2010, ten employees were interviewed, and in the second phase in 2018, five of them were re-interviewed. In 2010, the interviewees were working as employees in a restaurant where well-being was constantly challenged during work. During the second round of interviews in 2018, the interviewees had continued their careers in the sector and worked in five different restaurants. The findings indicate the signs of rapid change within the specific restaurant studied and provide insights into managing well-being at work in the restaurant industry as a whole – an industry that is constantly facing new types of challenges related to new working modes. Findings indicate that well-being at work is a holistic combination of individual and work-level activities; thus, a comprehensive approach to HRM is required.

1 Introduction

The restaurant and hospitality industries that belong to the same business sector are growing. From 2000–2010, this sector's annual employment in Europe grew by 2.9%, whereas the overall employment grew by merely 0.7%

yearly (Ernst & Young, 2013). Following the global economic crisis in 2008, the labour market in the European Union started exhibiting declining employment rates through 2012; by the end of 2013, it showed the signs of stabilisation (Eurostat, 2014). Despite the crisis, Finnish statistics indicate that the sector's workforce in Finland grew 43% between 1995 and 2016 and that approximately 30,000 new jobs are predicted to emerge within the sector by the year 2025 (MaRa, 2018). Rapid growth poses challenges for the sector as well as for its human resource management (HRM) practices and processes. For instance, part-time and temporary work (rented workforce) will be keenly associated with employment in the restaurant and hospitality industries in the near future.

This poses challenges for those businesses' recruitment processes and practices. In 2016, only 2% of these businesses experienced a shortage of the professional workforce, and by 2017, the number had reached 19%. In the third quarter of 2018, the shortage rates had increased to 31% (Confederation of Finnish Industries, 2018). Efficient HRM processes and practices as well as employee well-being are important contributors to efficient restaurant businesses. Employee well-being, for instance, is associated with better service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty, all of which both directly and indirectly affect branch profitability (Madera, Dawson, Priyanko, & Mapel, 2017). Studies have exemplified how HRM practices in the restaurant industry can be considered unprofessional, underdeveloped, and inferior when compared with other industries (Koys & DeCotiis, 2015).

Staffing, personnel training, performance appraisal, compensation of labour input, benefit practices, honest and supportive feedback, open flow of information, public recognition, and the opportunity to advance employees' careers as well as support their professional development are vitally important features in this industry. In addition, employee retention should be emphasised (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Murphy, Torres, Ingram, & Hutchinson, 2018). These concepts are considered essential HRM processes in the restaurant industry (Madera et al., 2017); they have been refined and branded in many ways, such as high-performing human resource management and

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high-performance work practices (HPWP), and they reinforce one another to increase working effectiveness (Murphy et al., 2018). The practices can be classified by the way they impact employees' skills and abilities, motivation and involvement and the way the work is structured and organized (Delaney & Huselid, 1996; Davidson, 2011). These HPWP practices generate social capital, being connected to employee performance in general (Jogaratnam, 2017; Murphy et al., 2018). Social capital is not easily copied by the competitors and thus offers good competitive advantage (Huselid, 1995). Investments in HPWP practices lower employee turnover and generate greater productivity and corporate financial performance as Huselid has discussed from the social exchange theory perspective (Huselid, 1995). However, HPWPs generating social capital connecting to employee performance have not been thoroughly studied, and they have been referred to as a 'black box' in the relative scientific literature (Murphy et al., 2018). There is ample existing research on HPWP in general, and scholars are proposing an expansion of research actions to understand how these practices are implemented most efficiently. A call has been made for in-depth case studies covering how restaurants have applied these practices (Murphy et al., 2018).

In this study, we contribute to this discussion by providing an in-depth analysis on well-being at work at one case restaurant. Then, we expand our analysis through a second round where there are five case restaurants and wherein the same interviewees are re-interviewed eight years later. In the first phase of our analysis, we focus on identifying the challenges that hindered well-being at work at restaurant level. In the latter part of our study we interview the same interviewees to find out how they see that work at the restaurant industry has changed and how they would have solved the challenges now with more experience on HRM. Even though our material is rather restricted, we see that due to our longitudinal research approach, it provides possibilities for generalizing the results. Due to a long time-span between the interviews and interviewees' career development in the sector, we see that they are able to provide a wide perspective for the changes that restaurant business has faced during this decade in Finland. Utilising the interviews and analyses, we attempt to find answers to the following two research questions:

RQ1: What challenges were hindering the working efficiency of HPWPs and employee well-being at the case restaurant?

RQ2: What have been the most significant human resource management related phenomenon in the interviewees' restaurants and how do they manage them?

1.1 Well-being at Restaurant Work

A restaurant is a diverse workplace where many different kinds of professionals work, including cooks, waiters, and bartenders. Typically, there are certain hierarchical structures, as in any other working environment. At the top is the proprietor, also known as the restaurateur, although many modern restaurants are also run by hired managers. Other managerial positions below the top manager vary – for example, shift managers and chefs – depending on the type of restaurant (Kiefer, 2002; Enz, 2004; Parsa, Self, Njite & King, 2005). Although large commercial actors appear to dominate the restaurant industry, a good portion may be comprised of small businesses that are managed by private owners (restaurateurs). These small restaurants must achieve competitive advantage not solely on the basis of their access to better resources, but also through the performance of their personnel (Amelia & Garg, 2016; Jogaratnam, 2017).

Food and drinks are the main products sold by restaurants in addition to service experiences, which are intangible and dependent upon immediate interactions between employees and customers (Madera et al., 2017). When individuals become concerned, many human interactions are present, yet not all of them are positive or wanted. Stereotypically, bullying and other types of harassment have been acknowledged as natural parts of the restaurant work environment; in some cases, these actions are even accepted. Bullying and harassment are negatively related to the well-being of employees as well as the restaurant as a whole. These negative actions can lead to lower work commitment, lower satisfaction, absenteeism, and burnout among employees, all of which may lead them to consider quitting (Mathisen, Einarsen, & Mykletun, 2008; Ariza-Montes, Arjona-Fuentes, Law & Han, 2017). The consequences of the negative actions may also cause adverse effects to the image and reputation of the whole restaurant sector (Ram, 2018).

A good working environment and workplace culture have been associated with influencing job satisfaction and employee engagement, commitment, motivation, turnover, and attraction (Warrick, 2017). Furthermore, restaurant work and working environments are associated with various ergonomics hazards and risks, such as heavy lifting, repetitive movements, and constant, prolonged standing or leaning forward, which may, if not properly managed, greatly influence employees' well-being (Laperrière, Messing, & Bourbonnais, 2017; Nanyan & Ben Charrada, 2018).

The maintenance of a company demands that productivity remain sustainable in the long term. Sustain-

able development requires that social capital remain uncompromised by economic development and pursuit (Higgins-Desbiolles, Moskwa & Wijesinghe, 2017). The manager should be able to utilise intangible organisational resources, such as the company's social capital, which should be effectively utilised and facilitated for the development of competitive advantage that thus provides possibilities for performance improvements (Jogaratnam, 2016). The manager is considered the primary resource due to his/her task-related education and experience (Jogaratnam, 2017). In many restaurants, employee commitment tends to be based on personal allegiance to the restaurateur. In these cases, restaurants are structured around the personalities of their restaurateurs or managers, and their success is highly dependent upon the managers' plans, intentions and actions. Sentimental and personal factors often define these individuals' decision-making processes (Marlow, Marlow, Patton & Ram, 2005). To be effective, management must listen to and take note of bad news in order to improve the restaurant's functions and make decisions beyond management's reach; this effectiveness is dependent upon open communication (Dekker, 2016).

There are always influential employees at workplaces that may either positively or negatively affect the working environment and culture in a significant way. It is important for managers to notice and select the right individuals for the right positions – individuals who are fit for that particular culture and working environment. Understanding the impact these employees may have by either undermining or reinforcing that culture is important for a business's success (Warrick, 2017; Yucheng & Frenkel, 2018). On the other hand, managers can create unhealthy cultures and outcomes. A manager who is not good fit for a working environment, who is not a good leader, and/or who makes bad decisions can lower performance and damage or dismantle a working culture (Warrick, 2015). The personal interactions between the restaurant's employees and customers are an essential factor; if positive, these interactions may lead to customer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. Friendly, timely, and professional service significantly affects the demand for different products (Bujisic, Bogicevic & Parsa, 2017; Nel, Williams, Steyn & Hind, 2018).

Sincerity is very important, and minor aspects such as an inauthentic smile or faked friendliness can undermine trust that is under construction between an employee and a customer (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen & Sideman, 2005). Moreover, well-motivated employees pay attention to what kind of image they give to the customers of themselves and of the restaurant (Grandey et al., 2005). There is an assumption in social exchange theory that explains all social life can be treated as an exchange of rewards, resources and obligations between actors, and that a person will seek to maximise profit of any kind in social situations (Lee, 2014). According to social exchange theory, benefits of any type received from the restaurant, which value has been subjectively assessed, can cause positive attitudes toward customers and work development and have positive impact on employees and restaurant (Ward, 2011).

2 Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Context

There is a great deal of part-time and temporary work available in the restaurant industry in Finland in particular and in Europe in general; consequently, these types of work are on the rise. As many as two-fifths of the employees in the restaurant and hospitality industry are part-time workers (Official Statistics of Finland [OSF], 2018). At the European level, 33% of the workers in the sector are working part-time, while 20% of the workers are working part-time in the overall economy (Hotrec, 2018). Nearly 70% of the employees in the restaurant and hospitality sector are working part-time because full-time employment is simply unavailable and because a part-time worker earns around two-thirds the salary of a full-time worker (Kauhanen, 2017). Temporary work is focused around specific regions, age groups, and professions. Temporary work is a prominent phenomenon in cities and restaurants; 38,000 individuals were working temporarily in 2013, which is 1.7% of the entire workforce in Finland. Since 2013, the quantity of temporary workers has risen by 12,600 (OSF, 2018). In the restaurant and hospitality sector, an estimated eleven million work hours were contributed by temporary workers in 2015, which corresponds to about 6,000 full-time jobs (Visit Finland, 2018). The typical temporary worker is young and lives in the city; as of 2017, more than half of all temporary workers were twenty to 29 years of age, while 20% were twenty to 39 years of age (OSF, 2017). Temporary work seems to be centralised toward young workers beginning their careers and young workers who are also students (OSF, 2015).

2.2 Study Setting

This study was conducted in two phases – the first in 2010 and the second in 2018. During the first phase, the purpose was to focus on the aspects that affected well-be-

ing at work on personal and organisational levels within one case restaurant. The restaurant employed about thirty workers, was owned by a private party, and served both food and alcohol. There were multiple workstations on their premises. The organisation structure included a hired manager, two shift managers, and the hourly employees. The restaurant was originally selected as a case organisation, as the company owners wanted to more thoroughly understand the underlying causes of the challenging state of their workers' well-being. Characteristics of the restaurant included low employee stability and commonly occurring disputes inside the work community. During the second phase, some of the interviewees from the first phase were re-interviewed in the second phase to discuss the challenges identified now, after several years of working in other restaurants, more objectively and in the light of the general development of a restaurant industry in Finland. In this follow-up phase, combining the case situation from 2010 and the broader experiences within the branch from 2018, we aim to contribute to the scientific discussion on the mysterious 'black box' on HPWPs in the restaurant and hospitability sector.

2.3 Methods

This research is a qualitative interview study. The first phase focused on a case restaurant, which can be defined as empirical research using versatile and multifaceted information to study current events and workers within a particular environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). The second phase was a follow-up interview study that focused on the same interviewees who, at the time, were collectively working at five restaurants other than the original case restaurant. Materials were collected through semi-structured theme interviews, which provides a balance between structure and openness (Gillham, 2005). Interview lengths varied between twenty and forty minutes during both phases. The data analysis employed was the continuous comparison method (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994). When using this method, the material was searched for units of significance, that is, words, sentences, or paragraphs pertinent to the research questions; these units were named to facilitate categorisation. Finally, the categories were combined in a relevant way to obtain a common piece of explanatory material.

2.3.1 First phase (2010)

The case restaurant had several workstations (restaurant [1] and bars [5] on premises), and thus, the interviewees were selected from each workstation. The individual who worked most frequently in a certain workstation was selected to be interviewed. In addition, workers from different positions were selected – from managers to hourly workers. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, and notes were taken during the interviews to support the analysis. The potential number of workers in the restaurant was about twenty, although some temporary workers were constantly changing and there were little less than twenty regular workers. From those regular twenty workers, ten agreed to be interviewed; nine were male, one was female, and all were aged twenty to fifty years with three to twenty years of work experience in the restaurant industry. Most of them did not have any kind of education on restaurants or hospitality in general. However, few of them had completed an alcohol service pass, that is required to reach a managerial status in a restaurant by Finnish laws. The interview questions focused on finding the most relevant challenges concerning workers' well-being at the case restaurant. Although material collection was based on personal interviews, it is worth mentioning that this article's main author – who conducted the interviews – was also working in the case restaurant during the time the interviews were conducted. Thus, the first phase of this study possesses certain characteristics of action research, as the researcher was familiar with the interviewees and the working atmosphere (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

2.3.2 Second phase (2018)

After eight years, the interviewees had continued their working careers and gained additional experience. From the original ten, five were interviewed again; all were male, aged 30–45 years. These individuals were chosen due to suitability and availability, as they were those employees who had continued their careers within the restaurant industry. Since 2010, they had worked in various restaurants and in various positions and completed some advanced training, like separate management courses not leading to any specific degree. Four interviewees had achieved managerial positions, and one had continued his/her career in a different restaurant as hourly employee without any plans to advance manager status. Interviewees had work experience varying from fourteen to 23 years, all of whom worked in different restaurants (four were bars, one also provided food service). All their

current workplaces were considerably smaller (less than eight employees) than the restaurant in 2010. The following interview questions were implemented: In the situation of 2010, what should have been done to ensure HPWPs had worked properly? How do these practices are working now in the interviewees' current workplaces?

3 Results

3.1 Challenges Hindering Well-being at Restaurant Work (2010)

The main source of confusion was identified as relating to unclear organisational structures as well as unclear leadership principles and practices. Nearly half the interviews focused on these grievances. The remaining identified factors challenging well-being at work followed by challenges related to hierarchical structures and leadership problems; namely, these were identified as *employee appreciation and collaboration* and *flow of information*.

3.1.1 Hierarchical structure and leadership problems

Leadership had mentally and (partly) physically drifted too far from the work community, thus weakening or even abandoning contact with the work community and its activities. As a result, the restaurant manager was incapable of directing activity within the work community, taking care of the restaurant's operating conditions, or addressing its problems. The leader's authority was only based on the hierarchical position rather than expertise and knowledge of the restaurant, as emphasised in an interview quotation by employee 'A': 'Manager leaves two days before a big event, and when comes back, has hangover and then starts "bossing over" without any clue what's happening.'

At the same time, due to this neglect and absence of secure leadership, there ensued a situation of multiple bosses made possible due to a special group. Members of this group had been awarded this special status by the restaurant manager and were his or her personal friends. They hardly participated in the restaurant's activities aside from giving orders to employees, and because of this, they officially lacked authority. The employee 'A' expressed the prevailing situation with the following: 'There is a "Good brother-team." Some are doing just a few little things...Friends of the manager.' They passed their tasks onto others—presuming they even had any tasks. When

passing on tasks, they used threatening expressions and tones of voice. Because the organisation of the restaurant was unclear, they succeeded in this endeavour. About the restaurants' situation overall, they thought that nothing was wrong.

There were very negative attitudes towards leadership in general and towards the special group in particular. The basic assumption was that the manager did not execute his or her duties, and trust in the manager was non-existent among employees. It seemed the further the leadership drifted, the more adamantly the special group attempted to fill the void. This leaderless and multiple-leader situation was described as very stressful by workers, who were not content with their working conditions in any way. Consequently, the quality of work suffered, and many tasks were left untouched and neglected, as expressed in an interview quotation by employee 'B': 'Always the same people slack and just drink coffee.'

The restaurant manager and special group resisted changes very strongly. Apparently, all of them were afraid of losing their privileged statuses. Through their perspectives, everything was fine and there was no need for change; however, the situation was quite different according to hourly workers, who awaited change enthusiastically. There had been plenty planning attempts and suggestions thrown around, and much time and effort had been spent; however, because all changes required the restaurant manager's approval, proposals and plans were left unexecuted, as highlighted in an interview quotation by employee 'B': 'A terrible resistance to change for people who have enjoyed that ease and indifference, «I am not used to doing it» and «This much work has always been sufficient» are commonly heard excuses.'

3.1.2 Employee appreciation and collaboration

Employees believed their own activities were keenly contributing to their motivation. Every employee had to take over their own tasks and dare to do their parts, even if one could not handle his or her own load. Being active in the work community has a great deal to do with one's own and others' job satisfaction. Many found themselves useful when they did other work outside their own areas of responsibility in the event that it was neither expected nor one's own decision. As brought forth by employee 'C': 'One can affect comfort for a lot of people, for yourself and for others. The meaning of work is retained and if challenges are needed, they can be sought, but mainly there are no opportunities to find challenges.'

Nobody liked cleaning after others or being responsible for others' tasks. These aspects were mentioned as causing notable frustration. It was also considered of great importance that everyone be assigned a clear area of responsibility. The reason for frustration was briefly due to the difficulty and failure of the restaurant's operation and the resulting disappointment. Frustration was also increased by prevalent negligence. Employees did not appreciate their own work because nobody else appreciated it. Employees were infrequently shown appreciation or respect and they were often ignored. When trying to motivate employees or create communality, the manager arranged some evening outings outside work. However, such events were not always open to all members of the work community. The exclusion of some members seemed offensive, and many felt insulted that such events always included only a certain group or that the activities chosen were not suitable for everyone. This exclusion is highlighted in an interview quotation by employee 'D': 'Those who do all the work begin to have a bad attitude on work.'

Humour was considered a very important factor in coping with different situations. It was emphasised that everyone should take responsibility of their own and fellow workers' well-being and consider that everyone understands humour differently. It was considered very important that employees treat others appropriately and that all types of bullying and harassment be ceased.

Unfortunately, interviewees mentioned that some individuals within the work community lacked necessary consideration to practice these values. This concern was brought forth by employee 'E' by stating: 'This is «a big boys' playground». Many can take a joke and don't take it seriously. You just have to know how to take it and let go.'

3.1.3 Flow of information

Interviewees pointed out that the flow of information should be as straightforward and honest as possible within the work community. This was not the case in the studied restaurant community, which caused great frustration among the interviewees. Concerned workers usually received information through detours, such as from a customer rather than a manager; interestingly, this was very common. In many cases, information did not even arrive at the correct individuals. Feedback was often given indirectly, such as in the form of gossip or rumours. When managers' feedback was direct, it was nearly always negative and was presented through shouting or name-calling. Employee 'D' recalls a situation, in which problems in flow of information actualize: 'Manager just picks up the info

sheets, which he/she has made just before and then tries to assign work assignments and advice employees what they should do. When this happens, employees know more about the situation than the manager. The manager tries to take control of the situation without even asking anybody what the situation is. Then fails miserably.'

The most adamant wish among the interviewees was that the restaurant manager learned his or her own area of responsibility and acted as a leader. A manager should have answers to questions concerning the overall function of the restaurant; if he or she is unable to answer a question, then he or she should find the answer and give it to whoever is in need of it. The restaurant manager should always be accessible and visible to both workers and customers. All those in charge should be more involved and more interested in their work. Interviewees also expressed their wishes that the highest-level managers were more interested in their workers' well-being at work, as expressed in an interview quotation by employee 'E': 'I would like to see more responsible people involved and be more interested.'

3.2 Challenges Re-analysed

All the interviewees had clearly learned much from the tense working atmosphere in the case restaurant during phase one. They paid close attention to how they worked and how their employees were treated. During phase two, after several years had passed, the interviewees perceived how that work community was dysfunctional and were thus able to understand the challenges the case restaurant faced during that time. As more experienced professionals in the restaurant industry, they were now able to understand how that tense work situation could have been rectified in 2010. Concerning their personal well-being at work in 2018, they emphasised how they now experienced balance in their working lives. The interviewees considered their employment and compensation policies that they offer employees as fair and encouraging, and they believed employees should be able to make a living in working at restaurants or, at the very least, have some kind of alternative source of income in addition to the restaurant work. As managers and experienced professionals, they now understood that an affluent employee is a kind of living commercial for their restaurant's excellence in all manners. In addition, their attitudes towards employees were very supportive; they trusted their employees, assigned them many responsibilities, and allowed them to think for themselves.

Concerning the challenges experienced within the case restaurant in 2010, the interviewees identified six common themes they perceived as contributing to workers' well-being at restaurant work specifically as well as any during the kind of work in general. Firstly, they emphasised the challenges that had resulted from the hierarchical organisation structure at the initial case restaurant and pointed out how they perceived lower-level hierarchical structures within their current workplaces that increased well-being at work. Interviewee "A", now manager, recalls: "There were too many things to be taken care of by one and manager did not share the burden. There is more to gain if you discussed more with each other and asked the opinions of others that might know better."

All interviewees considered their current workplaces as low-hierarchy organisations in which managers worked alongside their employees on a daily basis and where there were no appointed shift managers or equivalently middle-managerial positions. A low-hierarchy structure was perceived as encouraging communication processes within the work community. All the employees were easily available and face-to-face interaction was perceived as the most common way to convey information and receive feedback. In addition, social media applications were used for matters that were not considered urgent.

Secondly, small unit sizes were considered more flexible in appointing responsibilities. It was considered very important that every worker knew what everyone else was doing at any moment. Thus, any worker could fill in for another if necessary, as pointed out by 'D': 'We have such a small team, so the responsibilities are shared by many people and at the same time it enables the know-how of many people to be used in many areas.'

This was also a way to circle around the lack of career advancement; due to small unit sizes and low hierarchical structure, there were very few opportunities for career advancement. As a solution, one way to get around the lack of advancement opportunity was to learn many different functions of the restaurant and thus gain additional expertise. It was emphasised that experience gained in these restaurants was appreciated by the labour market, and as such, these restaurants were very tempting workplaces. Furthermore, employee commitment was high and many former employees had returned.

Concerning the above findings, we highlight as a potential future research topic to further investigate alternative routes for career advancement. In addition, we highlight the need to redefine the contents of the career advancement concept in general.

Thirdly, personnel relations were emphasised often during the interviews. These relations were understood as the synergy between employees who included a common understanding about company processes and the humility to obey common instructions and pay attention to others. This relates to a solid company culture in general. Suitability to the work community was considered more important than were working skills, which may be taught and learned; if a potential employee does not fit in with the work community, their well-being at work may be hindered. If discontent is left unresolved, the restaurant's atmosphere will become distressing, and, at some point, customers will notice and possibly even go elsewhere. Interviewees pointed out how important it is that managers know about the individuals they are planning to hire—if not personally, then at least by reputation. The decision of hiring is not made without consulting current employees, as managers want all their employees to fit perfectly for the position as well as within the work community. It was also reported a common practice that managers test potential employees once or twice to see how they might fit those positions. In these instances, managers more easily assign responsibilities to individual workers due to their familiarity with those employees, as brought forth by 'C': 'I, as a manager like to hire «good guys», because restaurant work is team work and I want that it is easy to work with someone. Like being on the same frequency.'

Concerning the findings above, we recommend as a potential future research topic to explore the advantages and disadvantages of personal relations (friendships) and their influence on management style and creating company culture.

Fourthly, managerial responsibilities and trust were acknowledged as being very important for restaurants' success. Four interviewees were hired managers who portrayed their jobs and responsibilities as 'acting like and having all the power of the owner but none of the financial risk', meaning real owners did not take part in running the restaurants; rather, they tended to stay out of the way and trust their managers completely, whom they believed were more than qualified to run the restaurants' operations. Then, in turn, managers trusted their employees, thus creating positive thread and motivating managers to run the restaurants as though they were their own.

Managers did their best, paid very close attention to detail, and were concerned about the restaurants' reputations and performances beyond what was expected of them. They also cared about their employees and considered their fair treatment to be paramount to the restaurants' success, as becomes apparent from quotation by 'B': 'I am trying to create a workplace where people would

prosper and they could do it easily. I try to commit employees so that the restaurant would stay in their mind... That they would think that they would not find any better place to work.'

Managers could choose their operating models by themselves and adjust them when necessary, which was considered very beneficial in comparison with the larger units and restaurants that are listed companies, wherein only financial gain dictates operation models and wherein responsible people are often alienated from the reality of the everyday operations.

To deepen our understanding about the effects of ownership and alienation of responsible people as described above, we recommend as a potential future research topic to explore the differences and similarities of human resource management in the listed companies and privately owned restaurants and assess the effects on restaurants' success of HRM methods for different kinds of ownerships.

Fifthly, managers used 'employee favours' to partly compensate employees' work inputs in addition to discount prices that are common for restaurant employees. These kinds of activities were possible due to managers' leadership roles and familiarity with all employees. As 'employee favours', employees could use the company car for their own errands and the restaurant could support their hobbies. Employees could use their special skills – such as photography or marketing – outside their restaurant work responsibilities. This was considered empowering, as it cultivated meaningfulness within the work environment and built both communality and trust. In addition, work-related hobbies – such as participating in professional competitions – were encouraged and supported, as expressed in an interview quotation by 'A': 'An employee was very eager to participate in an official cocktail competition. So we paid his trip there. Now he is making eagerly all the cocktails he learned there.'

Due to possible benefits as seen before, we recommend as a potential future research topic to study the usefulness of employee favours to increase productivity, employee commitment and well-being and estimate their cost efficiency.

Concerning the temporary workforce as the sixth theme raised from the material, the interviewees pointed out how challenging it was to apply HPWPs – a challenge that was considered two-sided. Any work done for HPWPs was not time-efficient enough to affect temporary workers.

The other problem emerged when workers were present only one or two times, in which case their livelihoods were not dependent upon that particular job and their investment of time and/or effort was minimal. Inter-

viewees emphasised that, in order for HPWPs to work, employees should be permanently hired and that temporary workers should be—in theory—equal in their treatment and inclusion to permanent employees; however, in practice, they are not. Managers had given temporary workers discount privileges and believed, in this way, temporary workers were somewhat committed to their jobs. Temporary work was considered as being a great opportunity to evaluate potential candidates for recruitment. Only after working a short amount of time, it may become apparent whether or not a candidate is permanent employee material. Temporary workers mainly could not match the permanent workers' performance greatly due to their unfamiliarity with the restaurant as well as their lack of skills and capabilities permanent employees possessed. At times, however, temporary workers did contribute new influence and knowhow. In addition, a temporary worker's character might not be suitable for working in this particular restaurant or in the restaurant industry in general, and therefore, cooperation may be challenging. The restaurants relied heavily on employees' familiarity with their customers, as employee familiarity is a huge factor in building customer loyalty and facilitating positive dining experiences. If employee turnover is high, customers might attend different restaurants wherein they are familiar with the workers, as customers tend to follow well-liked employees. Significance of this point comes apparent from quotation by 'B': 'It's important that you talk to your customers so they become friends and then come back to the restaurant again. It matters if the familiar employee is present to talk with the customer. New or a random worker does not necessarily do so...'

Due to the tricky nature of temporary work in restaurants as described above, we recommend as a potential future research starting point to study the compatibility, possibilities and weaknesses of HPWPs and temporary work in restaurants.

4 Discussion and Conclusions

Previous literature suggests that case studies should be conducted on how HPWPs have been applied in daily work of restaurants. This study was conducted for this purpose, wherein it was possible to interview professionals firstly while they worked as employees and secondly as experienced professionals with managerial expertise. Initially, they were working in a less-than-optimally functioning restaurant, while later, they decided upon their own work preferences as managers of their own restaurants.

The situation in 2010 at the case restaurant was centralised around the top management's incompetence supplemented by unclear hierarchical structures. In addition, problems revolved around a small group of workers who had assigned themselves more responsibilities they believed were pertinent. It was clearly observed that a small group of employees was very disruptive for the restaurant's working processes and work community. Such a situation may risk the overall well-being, motivation, and productivity within any restaurant. Long-lasting conflict inside the work community may easily devolve to 'blaming the worker' for the restaurant's poor performance without identifying and examining all other potential factors contributing to the poor level of well-being at work.

In 2018, the interviewees coherently revealed how they felt about the problematic situation while working at the case restaurant in 2010 as well as how they felt certain situations could have been handled more efficiently. The importance of functional leadership as well as open communication practices inside the work community were made very apparent. When managers pay attention to their employees and implement basic HPWPs by assigning responsibilities and trusting their employees, greater appreciation is reciprocally manifested by workers towards their workplace and managers, thus increasing their degrees of enthusiasm and commitment towards their work. Mutual commitment can be referred to as a psychological contract between the employee and the employer contributing to well-being at work to general well-being apart from work (Rousseau, 1989). This kind of holistic approach is supported, for instance, by Huertas-Valdivia, Llorens-Montes, and Ruiz-Moreno (2018), who studied the relationship between HPWPs and empowered leadership. Similar to this study, the importance of emphasising long-term employee potential during the hiring process as well as assigning employees responsibilities and fair compensation for their work was mentioned in the results achieved by Huertes-Valvidia et al. (2018). Differently than the present study, Huertes-Valvidia et al. (2018) emphasised upwards mobility, whereas career advancement, special experience, and the promoting of one's labour market value were considered significantly horizontal in our study.

Well-being at work is a holistic combination of individual and work-level activities; the line between work and free time often blurs. Nonetheless, work and non-work factors are often treated separately (Schulte & Vainio, 2010; Reiman & Väyrynen, 2018). This supposedly relates to employers' restricted possibilities to influence employees' actions outside working hours.

However, a notable way to extend the reach of HPWPs outside working hours may involve emphasising the employee favour practices. They were considered being very effective in generating positive attitudes towards work, managers, and the restaurant as a whole. This indicates that well-being at work is part of a larger context and the interventions aimed toward improving that well-being extends beyond work-related factors as issues of workers' general life satisfaction.

Although not explicitly stated, we have highlighted the combination of work and non-work as potential factors contributing to the 'black box' dilemma in the restaurant industry. Based on the interviews, employee favours were not considered significant investments by employers. Naturally, this is the case for smaller restaurants (such as in this study) and the investments would be larger among the larger working communities.

The compatibility of HPWPs and temporary work in restaurants is a scarcely researched topic, and few points were identified here – for example, HPWPs are difficult to successfully apply with temporary work. One practical way to achieve mutual commitment between participants, as shown in this study, is through the employer and temporary workers agreeing upon certain opportunities for personnel discounts. Social exchange theory also supports this kind of conciliation. Additionally, notable is the substantial growth within restaurant and hospitality industry wherein businesses reported workforce shortages, yet at the same time, big actors were downsizing their staffs and relying more heavily on temporary workers.

As emphasised earlier, temporary workers usually cannot match the performance levels and requirements of permanent employees, as they are not always as skilled or capable as are permanent employees. For workers, full-time employment seems to be increasingly unavailable or difficult to obtain whilst they are forced into other work modes, such as temporary work. This situation constitutes several stumbling blocks, as the adverse employee well-being among both permanent and temporary workers decreases their performance and thus contributes both directly and indirectly to the company's profits.

4.1 Limitations

When considering our results and analyses, we would like to point out the following aspects that should be acknowledged as the limitations of this study. Firstly, the interviews in 2010 were conducted only among employees working at one restaurant. However, to provide more generalizable results, we administered a re-interview

phase with the interviewees who had continued their careers in the restaurant and hospitality sector. During that phase, the interviewees represented five different restaurants. The interviewees worked both in 2010 and in 2018 in rather small restaurants; however, the initial one being larger than the restaurants in the second phase. The restaurant in 2010 had intermediate management levels whilst such levels were not identified from the restaurants in the second phase. Secondly, the restaurants in this study were all the same type and fast food restaurants, lunch diners or cafeterias were not included. Thirdly, the interviews were conducted mainly due to the restricted resources of only one researcher. This increases the possibility for in-depth analyses, although it also increases the level of subjectivity while interpreting the results. Therefore, the analysis phase was conducted by two researchers, thus reducing potential biases related to subjectivism.

For future studies, we propose that more interviews be conducted among restaurants varying in size and type. As a potential future research topic, we also highlight that restaurants with problems related to employee well-being should not be exclusively analysed; rather, future researchers should try to learn from the practices and processes within work communities wherein well-being at work is favourably high.

Bionote

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