

**Communal Orientation and Employee Well-Being: Examining the Mediating Roles of  
Positive Relational Communication and Perceptions of Customer Interactions**

by

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## **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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## **Abstract**

Customer interactions have emerged as a significant cause of work stress for hospitality employees. The high levels of burnout and turnover that characterize the hospitality industry are closely associated with customer stressors. However, employees who adopt a communal approach to customer relationships may encounter fewer of these challenging situations. Communal orientation refers to a disposition where individuals care for others based on their needs and welfare, with less expectation of return. Research has shown that communal orientation is a vital element of satisfying interpersonal relationships and personal well-being. Do hospitality employees with communal orientation benefit from caring for their customers? If so, how does communal orientation affect employee well-being experiences, and in what ways? The present study provides answers to these questions by exploring the relationship between communal orientation and well-being outcomes among hospitality frontline employees and examining potential mediating mechanisms of employee communication behaviours and subjective perceptions in this relationship.

The study surveyed 610 frontline employees from 23 hospitality enterprises on Hainan Island, China, including hotel receptionists, butlers, concierges, cruise line attendants, restaurant servers, bartenders, park interpreters, car rental and retail associates, and recreation service workers. The participants' communal orientations and well-being experiences were evaluated, and they were asked to recall their positive relational communication behaviours within customer interactions from the previous workday, as well as their perceptions of those interactions.

As predicted, higher levels of employee communal orientation were associated with

lower burnout, greater work engagement, higher job satisfaction, and greater life satisfaction, and these associations were partially explained by employees' perceived intimacy during customer interactions. Employee-perceived social orientation during customer contacts was also a potential mediator that helped explain the significant association between communal orientation and work engagement. However, perceived information seeking was a strong suppressor on the association between communal orientation and the need for recovery, making that association nonsignificant. Contrary to the prediction of the study, there was no association between employee communal orientations and their self-reported positive relational communication behaviours, suggesting that employee behaviours were not mediators in the association between communal orientation and well-being outcomes.

This study contributes to the existing literature on relationship orientation by emphasizing the importance of having a communal orientation in customer-contact service jobs. The findings also highlight the significance of understanding how individual differences in perceived intimacy may impact the well-being experiences of employees with high communal orientations. By recognizing communal orientation and relationship intimacy as crucial resources that establish employee well-being, hospitality managers can make better decisions and explore effective solutions in terms of frontline recruitment, intimacy-enhancing interventions, and investment in employee well-being.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Substantial evidence supports the benefits of well-being at work. In the hospitality industry, ensuring favourable employee well being is critical not only for individual mental health and quality of life (Koc & Bozkurt, 2017; Yang et al., 2020), but also for service quality and organizational performance (Benitez & Medina, 2021). However, hospitality employees face numerous challenges regarding workplace stressors, particularly interpersonal interactions with customers (Han et al., 2016; Hsieh & Yen, 2005).

The hospitality industry encompasses a variety of services and businesses related to leisure and customer satisfaction, including accommodation, catering, and travel and tourism. Hospitality frontline employees hold a great number of customer service positions, such as front desk receptionists, concierges, butlers, restaurant servers, park interpreters, retail associates, and cruise attendants. Through their interactions with customers, frontline employees develop and maintain positive customer relationships, which are vital for the success of hospitality businesses.

Interactions with customers in the hospitality industry can be emotionally demanding (Grandey et al., 2013; Hochschild, 1983; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011), which can make them a significant source of work stress (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019; Karatepe & Uludag, 2008) with personal and organizational ramifications (Lee et al., 2016). Hospitality frontline employees are susceptible to high levels of work-related burnout (Dollard et al., 2003; Karatepe & Uludag, 2008; Koc & Bozkurt, 2017), low self-efficacy in recovery, and negative spillover effects on their well-being at home (Koc & Bozkurt, 2017; Yang et al., 2020). In the UK, a survey found that 84% of hospitality employees experienced work

stress, with 20% suffering from severe work-related mental health issues (Royal Society for Public Health [RSPH], 2019). Another survey in the UK reported that 75% of hospitality employees had experienced mental health issues at some point during their career (Health and Safety Executive [HSE], 2018). Consequently, 65% of catering and leisure employees are unhappy, and 60% are considering a job change (Investors of People [IIP], 2015, as cited in Perkins, 2015), with 30% leaving their job within a year – twice the UK average (People 1st, 2015). High levels of work burnout, low job satisfaction, and high employee turnover negatively impact perceived service quality and ultimately business success (Benitez & Medina, 2021; Kysilka & Csaba, 2013). Employee well-being issues and related costs represent significant challenges to hospitality organizations (Chen & Wu, 2017; Han et al., 2016).

As such, a critical question facing researchers is: what factors might help enhance employee-customer interactions and boost employee well-being? The current study drew heavily from the social psychological concept of communal orientation, which is a relationship theory that suggests individuals who are more communal in their relationships care for the needs of others without the expectation of immediate return (Clark & Mills, 1993, 2011). This orientation has implications for prosocial behaviours (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010) and communication experiences (Lemay & Clark, 2008). Ultimately those with a communal approach to relationships tend to experience enhanced well-being compared to those with a stronger focus on exchange and reciprocity (Le et al., 2018).

That said, the relationship between communal orientation and employee well-being has not been well understood in the literature. Therefore, the present study aimed to identify key explanatory mechanisms that might underpin this relationship, specifically focusing on

the roles of employee communication behaviours and employee perceptions of customer interactions. Findings of the study may contribute to the literature on hospitality employee well-being by exploring the benefits of having a communal orientation in service jobs. From a practical perspective, these findings could support personality-based recruitment, healthy behavior training, and other employee well-being programs.

### **1.1 Rationale for Study**

Despite the crucial role of employee well-being in the hospitality industry, there is a lack of understanding regarding the specific factors and mechanisms in customer interactions that contribute to it. Prior research has highlighted the detrimental effects of precarious working conditions (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019), customer mistreatment (Hu et al., 2018), and emotional labour (e.g., dealing with emotionally disturbing situations) (Lam & Chen, 2012; Shani et al., 2014) on hospitality employees. While these studies have shed light on workplace stressors, there is a dearth of research on the personal resources that may enhance individual well-being. This is an important gap, as failure to consider employees' dispositional inclinations to be prosocial and caring during customers interactions may overlook their positive effects on well-being.

Individuals who possess a dispositional inclination to help and care for others, known as communal orientation, have been found to experience enhanced psychological well-being (Le et al., 2018). According to communal relationship theory (CRT) (Clark & Mills, 2011), individuals with high communal orientation tend to prioritize the welfare of others and engage in prosocial behaviours without expecting immediate and equivalent returns (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). By adhering to communal norms in their relationships, these individuals may derive various personal and relational benefits (Le et al., 2013) that



contribute to their overall well-being, both in close relationships (Le et al., 2018) and in contexts of exchange relationship (Clark et al., 1987; Medvene et al., 1997; Mills et al., 2004). In the context of hospitality, employees high in communal orientation may be more inclined to invest additional effort into caring for and assisting their clients. As a result, they may be more likely to experience relational rewards, e.g., in the form of a sense of communality and emotional closeness, that can enhance their well-being (Goodwin, 1996; Schön Persson et al., 2018). However, this relationship has yet to be fully explored in the literature.

## **1.2 Study Purpose and Conceptual Model**

While communal orientation has been linked to well-being outcomes in prior research (Buunk & Schaufeli, 2018; Hepburn & Enns, 2013; Le et al., 2018), inconsistencies in the strength and nature of this link (i.e., positive or negative association) have been observed, particularly in health care contexts (Areguy et al., 2019; Truchot & Deregard, 2001). Such inconsistencies suggest the possibility of mediating factors that may influence the relationship between communal orientation and well-being (Le et al., 2018). In the contexts of hospitality services, two potential mediating factors are employee positive relational communications and employee perceptions of customer interactions.

Communal orientation may motivate employees to engage in positive relational communications, such as offering encouragement and compliments, which are prosocial behaviours in service scenarios that demonstrate help and care (Mirivel, 2019). In contrast to task-focused conversations aimed solely at fulfilling work tasks, positive relational communications that are voluntarily initiated tend to facilitate the satisfaction of human-needs, such as connectedness and relationship intimacy, thereby contributing to individual

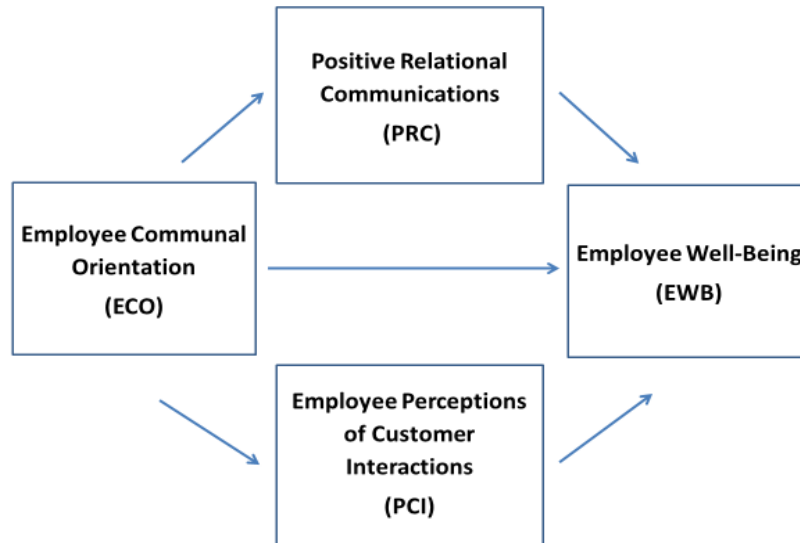
well-being (Mirivel, 2019; Socha & Beck, 2015). In this way, positive relational communications that are attributed to individual communal traits may benefit personal well-being.

Perceptions or impressions formed during initial interactions play a critical role in relationship outcomes (Sunnafank, 1986, 1988). Positive impressions predict greater levels of social capital and longer-term relationship development (Human et al., 2013; Putnam, 2000). Communal-oriented individuals are likely to form positive impressions of their relationship partners' responsiveness because of a projection effect of their own attentiveness and care (Lemay & Clark, 2008; Murray et al., 1996). Similarly, hospitality employees with a communal condition may perceive their clients to be just as caring and supportive as they are, motivating them to stick to communal norms and *invest* further in their customers. This may result in experiencing well-being outcomes in their business relationships (Murray et al., 1996, 2000).

The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to investigate the relationship between employee communal orientation and employee well-being in service contexts, and (2) to explore the potential mediating roles of employee positive relational communications and employee perceptions of customer interactions in this relationship. The dynamics of this study are illustrated in Figure 1. The findings of this study could advance the communal orientation literature and provide practical implications for hospitality practitioners by identifying critical factors that promote frontline employee well-being.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Model: Association of Employee Communal Orientation to Employee Well-Being as Potentially Mediated by Employee Positive Relational Communications and Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions*



## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

In the hospitality industry, the customer experience depends on aspects such as frontline smiles and quick responses to customer needs. As a result, business success relies on ensuring that employees are healthy, motivated, and engaged (Benitez & Medina, 2021). However, hospitality employees are more at risk of work stress and health problems related to customer contact (Ariza-Montes, et al., 2019). Statistics related to work stress, mental health issues, and turnover intention in hospitality employees (HSE, 2018; RSPH, 2019) indicate a need to examine possible factors that can alleviate stress and improve well-being. Specifically, communal orientation is a factor that can be explored. According to communal relationship theory (CRT) (Clark & Mills, 2011), employees who are high in communal orientation tend to engage in positive relational communications to care for their clients and develop positive perceptions toward their interactions. As a result, communal-oriented employees are more likely to experience a sense of well-being during customer interactions compared to non-communal oriented coworkers. Such experiences can be further achieved through their behaviours and perceptions, which are potentially shaped by individual communal orientations.

#### **2.1 Outline**

The following chapter focused on exploring the link between communal orientation and employee well-being, as well as potential explanatory factors for this link. It began with an overview of employee well-being and communal orientation and discussed how they may relate to each other. The chapter then explained potential mediators linking communal orientation to employee well-being and justified them using relevant theories. Specifically,

it focused on and hypothesized the potential mediating roles of employee positive relational communications and employee perceptions of customer interactions.

## **2.2 Hospitality Employee Well-Being**

The World Health Organization ([WHO], 2004) defines *health* not merely as the absence of illness but as a state of complete physical, mental, and psychological well-being. In this study, I focused on psychological health and adopted Soh et al.'s (2016) work-related well-being model to provide a descriptive sketch of both negative and positive aspects of employee well-being. Additionally, the study identified critical factors that may establish well-being within service contexts.

### **2.2.1 Conceptualization of Hospitality Employee Well-Being**

In the field of workplace research, Warr (1999) first defined employee well-being as employees' general feelings about themselves in relation to their job. Consistent with this holistic perspective, Robertson and Flint-Taylor (2008) defined *employee well-being* as the affective and purposive psychological state that employees experience in their work lives, involving the absence of work strain, meaningful experiences, and positive affects. Similarly, Soh et al. (2016) constructed a model of work-related well-being that includes both negative dimensions, such as strain experiences like burnout and the need for recovery, and positive dimensions, such as work engagement and job satisfaction. Life satisfaction was also added on to represent a context-free well-being (see Table 1).

#### **2.2.1.1 Strain Experiences: Burnout and Need for Recovery**

Work stress has been ubiquitous in the hospitality industry as customer contact is considered a significant source of stress for frontline employees (Koc & Bozkurt, 2017). Due to increased customer contacts and related job demand, the hospitality industry has

witnessed a high incidence of work stress (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019; Dollard et al., 2003; Hsieh & Yen, 2005; Koc & Bozkurt, 2017). A key outcome of work stress is the experience of strain (O’Neill & Davis, 2011), which can lead to burnout and a high need for recovery (Schmidt, et al., 2016). Strain experienced at work can also spill out into hospitality employees’ non-work sphere, reducing their perceived quality of life (Baker & Kim, 2020).

Burnout and need for recovery, as key indicators of strain, are highly related to emotional demands at work (Maslach & Jackson, 1981; Sluiter et al., 2003). *Burnout* is an adverse reaction by frontline employees involved in close interactions with customers (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993) – employees who experience burnout may feel emotional exhaustion, inefficacy, and depersonalization (Maslach et al., 2009). Consequently, they may feel emotionally drained (i.e., emotional exhaustion), believe they are not achieving anything worthwhile at work (i.e., low efficacy), and develop emotional distance that leads to cynicism and even hostility towards customers (i.e., depersonalization).

The term “*need for recovery*” refers to the need and amount of time required to recover from work-induced fatigue after the workday (Meijman et al., 1992). The service literature has identified prolonged fatigue, particularly distress, as a delayed consequence of emotional labour in services (Zhang et al., 2016). An unfulfilled need for recovery can lead to emotional irritation and even depression (Mohr et al., 2006).

**Table 1**  
*Hospitality Employee Well-Being Outcomes*

	<b>Positive Outcome</b>	<b>Negative Outcome (Work Strain)</b>
<b>Work-Related Well-Being</b>	Work Engagement	Burn Out
	Job Satisfaction	Need for Recovery
<b>Context-Free Well-Being</b>	Life Satisfaction	

### **2.2.1.2 Work Engagement**

Soh et al.'s (2016) well-being model emphasizes the importance of the meaningful aspect of employee work life. A sense of well-being should involve high levels of work engagement, which is the positive antithesis of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). *Work engagement* refers to an employee's positive, fulfilling, and work-related state of mind characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002). Specifically, *vigor* denotes high levels of energy and mental resilience, *dedication* pertains to being highly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and pride, while *absorption* is characterized by a high level of concentration. Collectively, engaged employees demonstrate high levels of energy, involvement, and dedication to their work (Bakker et al., 2008). In hospitality service settings, it is conceivable that engaged frontline employees are committed to providing high-quality customer service and find pleasure and meaning in their work, even when faced with the strenuous demands of the job (Bakker et al., 2008).

### **2.2.1.3 General Satisfaction with Job and Life**

General satisfaction with one's job and life should be included because they represent the affective aspect of well-being (Soh et al., 2016). *Job satisfaction* is a personal assessment of one's experiences at work and is a result of this evaluation. A high level of job satisfaction suggests "a pleasurable condition of a positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976, p. 1300). *Life satisfaction*, on the other hand, is an individual's global cognitive evaluation of the quality of their life (Peterson et al., 2005). It is a context-free aspect of well-being that is believed to be linked to work-related well-being (Warr, 1999). In the current study, job satisfaction and life

satisfaction were measured globally through individual overall evaluations of their job and life, respectively.

### **2.2.2 A Theoretical Approach to Understanding Hospitality Employee Well-Being**

This study was informed by the communal relationship theory (CRT) (Clark & Mills, 2011). Relationship research shows that people's relationship orientation guides their social interactions and shapes their personal experiences within those interactions. Individuals with a communal orientation tend to be highly responsive to others' needs (Clark & Mills, 2011), engage in prosocial behaviours (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010), and perceive personal and relational rewards (Le et al., 2013), which leads to well-being across various intimate and non-intimate relationships (Le et al., 2018). Applied to hospitality employees, communal orientation may likewise promote employee well-being by encouraging prosocial behaviours and achieving relational rewards during interactions with their clients. While few studies have examined these processes, there is a substantial body of literature on positive communication and relationship outcomes. Two additional theories may help recognize them as potential explanatory factors and explain *how* and *why* employee communal orientation may relate to employee well-being.

First, positive communication theory (PCT) (Socha & Beck, 2015) may help understand the potential role of employee positive communication behaviours in the link between communal orientation and well-being. According to PCT, positive relational communication (e.g., non-task-related talk like chit-chat) promotes well-being by facilitating human-needs satisfaction and reinforcing interpersonal relationships. Take self-disclosure for an example. Self-disclosure between employees and customers – often including disclosing and listening – has been shown to enhance emotional closeness and



contribute positively to employee well-being (Schön Persson et al., 2018). Since self-disclosure is often evoked under communal conditions (Kim & Sung, 2021), it would be reasonable to expect that hospitality employees in communal conditions can humanize customer interactions by engaging in self-disclosure, thereby turning these interactions into potential resources rather than job stressors.

Secondly, the theory of predicted outcome value (POV) (Sannafrank, 1986, 1988) may help to explore the potential role of employee perceptions in the process of promoting employee well-being. According to POV, employees may be motivated to maximize relationship outcomes based on their positive perceptions of customer contact. For example, employees who perceive intimacy during service encounters tend to nurture their relationships with clients (Horan & Bryant, 2019), leading to a sense of meaningfulness at work and job satisfaction (Schön Persson et al., 2018). Communal-oriented employees are more likely to develop such positive experiences at work, as communal orientation fosters more intimate interactions (Reis, 2021). Furthermore, communal orientation facilitates a projection effect of responsiveness upon their interaction partners (Lemay & Clark, 2008). As a result, employees with a high communal orientation tend to be more inclined toward building a communal bond (Lemay & Clark, 2008) and are motivated to promote that experience in both ongoing and future customer interactions (Sannafrank, 1988).

Therefore, adopting a communal goal perspective, customer interactions can be seen as an active resource for employees to achieve well-being at work, rather than a source of work stress. The extent to which communal orientation positively affects employee well-being may hinge on individual employees' behaviours and perceptions during customer interactions.

### **2.3 Communal Orientation in the Service Context**

According to CRT theory (Clark & Mills, 1993), employees' natural tendencies to care for clients' well-being can be classified as their *communal orientation*. In contrast to those high in exchange orientation, who believe in the principle of reciprocity in offering benefits (Murstein, et al., 1977), those high in a communal orientation tend to behave according to communal norms – they are attentive to others' needs, comfortable to express more emotions, and more likely to offer benefits but less likely to expect something in return (Clark & Mills, 2011). Communal orientation and exchange orientation are often considered mutually exclusive, and typically directed towards communal relationships (e.g., family) and exchange relationships (e.g., business partners), respectively. Therefore, the norms that dictate caring behaviour in each type of relationship are also mutually exclusive. Violating these norms may lead to negative consequences – adhering to exchange norms in a communal relationship, such as marriage, may cause problems (Clark et al., 2010).

However, Johnson and Grimm (2010) argued that communal and exchange relationships should be considered as separate and distinct constructs rather than mutually exclusive. While the literature has empirically tested the exclusivity of relationship orientations as polar opposites by using manipulated relationship scenarios, people in everyday life may experience multiple motives to care for a target human and perceive their relationship as a mix of communal and exchange (Johnson & Grimm, 2010). One example of such hybrid relationship is business relationship, which is inherently an exchange relationship but may be perceived as more communal when communal orientation comes into play.

Typically, the relationship between an employee and a client is an exchange relationship (Clark & Mills, 2011). This is because employees are compensated for the services they provide and are responsible for delivering them. Although employees may not expect immediate or direct repayment from customers (e.g., gratuities or gratitude), they would not offer services without pay. However, due to human's innate biological tendency to care for others (Clark & Mills, 1993), employees may direct their communal orientation more or less towards the client, leading to a shift in the service encounter's norms from exchange to communal. This creates a hybrid relationship that combines both exchange and communal norms (Clark & Mills, 2011), resulting in a more communal and fulfilling encounter for both the employee and the client (Goodwin, 1996).

#### **2.4 Communal Orientation and Employee Well-Being**

The hybrid relationship that emerges in service scenarios presents opportunities to enhance employee experiences and challenge stereotypes of customer contact. Research has established that a communal orientation is linked to autonomous caring behaviours (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). As such, intrinsic motivation stemming from a communal orientation can prompt hospitality employees to provide genuine care to their clients without feeling exploited, inequitably treated, or excessively draining their personal resources. Communal-oriented employees may also derive personal and relational benefits from this process (Le et al, 2018). While these rewards may seem minor, they can be enough to help restore balance for employees (Van Yperen, 1996) and contribute to their well-being outcomes in the hospitality service professions.

### **2.4.1 Personal and Relationship Rewards of Being Communal Oriented**

Giving cares to others can be rewarding (Le et al., 2013). A variety of personal rewards have been identified as a result of having a communal orientation (Le et al., 2013) or providing communal care (Crocker & Canevello, 2008), such as feelings of pleasure, happiness, and satisfaction (Le et al., 2013; Thibaut & Kelly, 1959). Such rewards can lead to strengthened self-concept and promote self-efficacy and self-esteem for the donor (Crocker & Canevello, 2008), enhancing the donor's personal resources to cope with the negative aspects of sustained care for others (Medvene et al., 1997). In business relationships, positive emotions such as happiness and joy can be even more profound than those experienced in close personal relationships (Clark & Finkel, 2005).

Moreover, communal-oriented individuals tend to experience positive interpersonal rewards, such as affirmation, love, and support from the people they care for, leading to relationship satisfaction and social resources (Le et al., 2013). These positive affects within communal relationships can be emotionally uplifting and help reduce burnout symptoms such as depersonalization and inefficacy (Medvene, et al., 1997). Social resources obtained, such as social support, can help buffer against negative well-being outcomes at work (Areguy et al., 2019).

In the hospitality service context, frontline employees are no stranger to communal caring (Goodwin, 1996; Gremler et al., 2001) and may autonomously perform helping and caring behaviours in non-intimate relationships with their customers (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). Pursuing communality (i.e., a communal relationship between employee and customer) at work (Goodwin, 1996) can facilitate hedonic experiences (Gremler et al., 2001) and motivation for employees (Schön Persson et al., 2018). However, when caring is

considered and provided as a job demand, employees may experience fewer personal choices and rewards, and more self-control and strain (Schmidt, et al., 2007; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). Therefore, it is important to foster a communal orientation among employees and create opportunities for them to experience personal and relational rewards to promote their well-being at work.

#### **2.4.2 Communal Orientation and Employee Well-Being Outcomes**

The rewarding experiences of communal-oriented people in their relationships suggest that communal orientation may facilitate positive or buffer negative well-being outcomes (Areguy et al., 2019; Le et al., 2018). This lends support for a similar effect among hospitality employees in service contexts. It was possible that an employee's communal orientation is associated with both negative and positive dimensions of personal well-being outcomes, including burnout, need for recovery, work engagement, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

##### **2.4.2.1 Communal Orientation and Burnout**

Robust evidence suggests that communal orientation effectively buffers burnout (Buunk & Schaufeli, 2018; Hepburn & Enns, 2013; Medvene et al., 1997; Van Yperen, 1996), and this is likely true for hospitality employees as well. Naturally, communal motivation is linked to a sense of autonomy (Weinstein and Ryan, 2010), and in a communal condition, positive emotional display may align with an employee's intrinsic motivation to care for others (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010) rather than just focusing on satisfying customers immediately. Communal-oriented employees may express emotions more autonomously and authentically, which can enhance their self-efficacy (Truchot & Deregard, 2001) and require less effort and energy (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010), thereby

reducing inefficacy and emotional drain from their job. In addition, genuine help and care may help employees build connections with their clients and gain personal rewards, bringing meaning and purpose to their service job (Schön Persson et al., 2018). As Strang (2007) observed, when employees feel that their transparency and authenticity is rewarding (e.g., experience customer gratitude and emotional closeness), they tend to feel accomplished and perceive the significance of their work, which can alleviate burnout symptoms such as feeling worthless and unable to cope with daily work.

#### **2.4.2.2 Communal Orientation and Need for Recovery**

Employees who have a strong communal orientation may experience less need for recovery compared to those with a low communal orientation. This is because the lack of reciprocity does not seem to bother the former as much (Buunk et al., 1993). Although business relationships often feature inequity, communal-oriented employees can still be tolerant and resilient when customers fail to reciprocate care, and their perceived inequity in a customer relationship may not decrease their satisfaction with that relationship (Buunk et al., 1993; Clark & Mills, 2011). As such, employees high in communal orientation are less likely to experience emotional irritation, which is primarily caused by a perceived imbalance between effort and reward (Krisor & Rowold, 2013). Additionally, personal rewards, such as customer appreciation, developed during the provision of care to customers can help restore the balance (Van Yperen, 1996). Therefore, the adverse effects of asymmetric relationships with buying customers on employees may be limited when they are high in communal orientation.

### **2.4.2.3 Communal Orientation and Work Engagement**

The work engagement literature has established a clear link between job resources and work engagement (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007; Wollard & Shuck, 2011). Hospitality employees with high communal orientation are thought to be actively engaged in services as their personal and social resources are strengthened in this process. First, attending to others' needs and caring for them has been shown to be linked with greater self-efficacy and self-esteem (Crocker & Canevello, 2008; Piferi & Lawler, 2006). Strengthened self-concepts indicate a high level of work engagement (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Additionally, being highly responsive to others' needs represents a certain personality quality that helps develop fruitful social resources, such as quality social bonds and positive relationships, through providing help and care (Le et al., 2013). Positive customer relationships are highly valued job resources because they provide emotional support for employee (Bakker et al., 2007). Such emotional support not only reduces the negative effects of emotional work but also stimulates employee engagement (Demerouti et al., 2001), particularly in situations of high job demands (Lee et al., 2020).

### **2.4.2.4 Communal Orientation and Job Satisfaction**

Communal orientation is a key factor in promoting job satisfaction through interpersonal rewards (Le et al., 2018), particularly by fostering mutual responsiveness in offering help and care (Goodwin, 1996). This is because communal motivation is hedonic in nature and rooted in employees' desire to perform caring and autonomous behaviours to make their clients feel good. As a result, they are more likely to follow a norm of voluntariness, which involves spontaneous behaviours that stem from genuine interest and are not directly linked to the service-delivery task, rather than a norm of opportunism,

which involves actions aimed at gaining transactional success, such as offering compliments as a sales opening or asking about customers' children before promoting a kid's haircare product (Goodwin, 1996). According to Goodwin (1996), customers respond more positively to voluntariness, which leads to heightened perceptions of communality, or a friendship-like relationship, between the employee and the customer. Within this relationship, customers are more willing to offer aid and help (Goodwin, 1996), which satisfies the employee's personal needs for connectedness (Gremier et al, 2001) and even personal friendship (Goodwin, 1996). Meeting employees' human needs, especially for friendship developed in business contexts, is crucial for overall job satisfaction (Ritchie, 2016; Yagil, 2008).

#### **2.4.2.5 Communal Orientation and Life Satisfaction**

Employees with a communal orientation may benefit not only in their work life but also in their personal life due to their propensity to develop positive relationships in different spheres (Le et al., 2013). This can have a dual effect. Firstly, positive relationships with clients can lead to pleasant experiences at work and broaden personal social resources (Fredrickson, 2000). Secondly, positive experiences at work may spill over into one's personal life and have an impact on other family members as well (Lavee & Strier, 2019). Therefore, employees with high communal orientation are more likely to experience greater life satisfaction, as the positive relationships they build through their work spill over into their everyday life.

Based on the previous analyses of the five dimensions of well-being, it is reasonable to hypothesize that there is a significant positive relationship between communal orientation and employee well-being.



**HI:** There will be a significant positive association between employee communal orientation and well-being, with higher levels of employee communal orientation associated with lower levels of burnout and need for recovery, as well as higher levels of work engagement, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

### **2.4.3 Potential Explanatory Mechanisms in the Association between Employee Communal Orientation and Employee Well-Being**

The link between communal orientation and well-being outcomes (Le et al., 2018), as well as its role in buffering against burnout, has been widely studied and supported in previous research (Buunk & Schaufeli, 2018; Hepburn & Enns, 2013). However, the findings regarding this association appear to be inconclusive across studies (Areguy et al., 2019; Medvene et al., 1997; Truchot & Deregard, 2001). For instance, in Medvene et al.'s (1997) study of self-help group leaders, communal orientation did not show a significant association with emotional exhaustion. Similarly, Truchot and Deregard's (2001) study on professional helpers, including nurses and social workers, found that communal orientation did not always have a protective (buffering) effect against burnout. Surprisingly, a recent study by Areguy et al. (2019) reported a negative association between communal orientation and life satisfaction. Such inconsistencies may be due to the fact that the link between communal orientation and well-being is influenced by various factors such as *when* and *how* this effect occurs. While researchers have started exploring this possibility of *when* (Areguy et al., 2019) this effect occurs, there is still a lack of understanding regarding *how* communal orientation is associated with personal well-being (Le et al., 2018).

Previous research has identified several mediating variables that help explain the indirect effects of communal orientation on well-being outcomes, including coping,

behaviour, and perception (Areguy et al., 2019; Donnellan et al., 2007; Kogan et al., 2010; Lemay & Clark, 2008). For instance, seeking instrumental support from others (e.g., advice) may help individuals cope with stress and partially mediate the link between communal orientation and well-being (Areguy et al., 2019). Negative interpersonal interactions can explain much of the association between communal orientation (e.g., communal positive emotionality) and negative well-being experiences (e.g., relationship distress) (Donnellan et al., 2007). Perceptual factors, such as subjective feelings toward relationship partners, may also play an important role in this link. For example, feelings of security (Lemay & Clark, 2008) and self-authenticity (Kogan et al., 2010) that stem from caring actions can in turn promote relationship satisfaction (Le & Impett, 2015).

Despite these valuable findings, more research is needed to identify the most “explanatory and powerful” mechanisms in the link between communal orientation and well-being (Le et al., 2018). Given the ongoing debate on this link (Areguy et al., 2019) and the increasing concerns about hospitality frontline well-being (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019), it is crucial to explore potential explanatory mechanisms: how communal-oriented employees *behave* and *perceive* during customer interactions. This effort may help address frontline well-being issues in the hospitality industry. Thus, the present study proposes two primary hypotheses to examine the extent to which the association between communal orientation and employee well-being may be mediated by employee positive relational communication (PRC) behaviours and employee perceptions of customer interactions (PCI). To support these hypotheses, the extant literature is examined in the following sections (2.5 and 2.6).

*H2.* The association between communal orientation and employee well-being will be mediated by employee positive relational communication behaviours, which include asking, complimenting, self-disclosing, encouraging, and listening behaviour.

*H3.* The association between communal orientation and employee well-being will be mediated by employee perceptions of customer interactions (PCI), which include perceived intimacy, task-social orientation, information seeking, and customer authenticity.

## **2.5 Employee Communal Orientation and Employee Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Positive Relational Communication**

Studies have indicated that people in a communal condition are more likely to engage in helping behaviours that yield well-being benefits for themselves (Le et al., 2013; Le et al., 2018; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). However, the specific behaviours that mediate this link remain unclear. To address this gap, the present study examined employee communication behaviours in business relationships in the hospitality industry. By exploring the ways in which these behaviours relate to communal orientation and support well-being, the study aims to deepen our understanding of this important area.

### **2.5.1 Positive Relational Communications**

Service encounters are social spaces where employees and customers exchange pleasantries while conducting business. These exchanges may include not only transactional but also relational elements (McCarthy, 2000; Scerri et al., 2017) that satisfy utilitarian and psychological needs for both parties involved (Bradley et al., 2010). Relational communications, in particular, can humanize service encounters and benefit both customers and employees (Clark et al., 1986; Goodwin, 1996).

In service contexts, conversation topics may go beyond the task at hand and involve high collaboration, such as small talk or chit-chat (McCarthy, 2000). These episodic modes of talk, as well as any extended periods where either the employee or the customer seeks to build or maintain a dyadic relationship, were initially conceptualized by linguists as forms of *relational communication* (Hossain & Chonko, 2018; Koester, 2006). Relational communications are often managed through “topic drift” (Holmes, 2000), where the conversation shifts from acquiring information to sharing personal experiences or inviting engagement. Topic drift is crucial within service encounters as it helps build relationships (Coupland, 2000; Koester, 2010; Liang et al., 2020). Sometimes, seemingly trivial and social exchanges, such as celebrating and complimenting, can invite and facilitate what Price and Arnould (1999) describe as “commercial friendships” (Otnes et al., 2012).

Topic drift can be rewarding, and determining which topics are most deserving and offer the most beneficial outcomes is a pertinent question. Positive communication theory (PCT) (Socha & Beck, 2015) sheds light on these dynamics. PCT scholars identified *positive relational communications* (PRC) as relational-oriented message processes that facilitate personal well-being through satisfying human psychological needs (e.g., connectedness) (Mirivel, 2019; Pitts & Socha, 2013; Socha, 2019; Sullivan, 2013). The present study focused on five PRC behaviours extracted from Mirivel’s (2019) model of the art of positive communication: asking, complimenting, self-disclosing, encouraging, and listening. These employee-specific PRC behaviours are identified as relationally significant in the well-being process, providing a lens through which to examine the specific topic drift that offer the most beneficial outcomes.

### **2.5.1.1 Asking**

*Asking* is typically viewed as an active and interactive strategy for acquiring information. During customer interactions, information seeking is both an obligatory behaviour for employees and a participation behaviour for customers (Yi & Gong, 2013). While most asking behaviours are implicitly instrumental and task-oriented, some asking can also serve important social functions when the expressions have predominantly affective meanings (Coupland, 2000). These affective expressions may satisfy personal social needs, such as protecting positive face, creating a safe atmosphere, and forming a positive impression (Koester, 2006). For instance, when clients ask for something that they have already been told but had forgotten, they may use a strategy of self-deprecation to apologize (Holmes, 2000), thereby protecting their face and showing respect to contact employees. Similarly, employees may use indirect questions to express deference, hoping to create a positive initial impression.

### **2.5.1.2 Complimenting**

A *compliment* is a speech act that explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for a positive value, such as possession or characteristic, that is highly valued by the speaker and hearer (Holmes, 1988). As a social and affective act, compliments serve as a politeness strategy and solidarity signal, rather than being informative or referential (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Holmes, 1988). Compliments act as social lubricants and help create and maintain rapport, provided they do not touch on personal or intimate topics (Spencer-Oatey, 2004). However, compliments can also be perceived negatively in certain situations, such as unwanted references to physical appearance (Tiggemann & Boundy, 2008). Nonetheless, they can be felt positively if

accompanied or modified by appreciation or are in line with certain cultural norms (Matsuoka, 2002).

### **2.5.1.3 Self-Disclosing**

*Self-disclosure* is a deliberate act of voluntarily and intentionally revealing personal thoughts, feelings, and experiences to others (Cozby, 1973; Derlega et al., 1993). This practice is prevalent among people who wish to build acquaintance, develop mutual trust, maintain intimacy, and receive social support (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Fehr, 2008; Regan, 2011; Sheldon, 2009; Trepte et al., 2018). Communal orientation has been linked to the willingness to express emotions that reveal weakness and vulnerability (Clark & Finkel, 2005), but this relationship is significant only within close relationships, and it is not clear within business relationships (Clark & Finkel, 2005). Given that self-disclosing can occur during service encounters, it is essential to explore whether disclosing behaviours are related to individual communal orientations and can help employees obtain positive relationship outcomes, such as social support (Areguy et al., 2019), emotional closeness (Schön Persson et al., 2018), and a sense of communion (Arnould & Price, 1993).

### **2.5.1.4 Encouraging**

*Encouragement* as defined by Wong (2015) refers to the “expression of affirmation through language or other symbolic representations to instill courage, perseverance, confidence, inspiration, or hope in a person(s) within the context of addressing a challenging situation or realizing their potential” (p.182). It is a profoundly social behaviour that serves to convey information and appreciation, making the subject feel cared for and loved, esteemed, and a member of a network of mutual obligations (Cobb, 1976). As such, encouragement is a prosocial and caring behaviour that is likely linked to social support.

Several studies, including those by Beets et al. (2010) and Mirivel (2019), have demonstrated the supportive nature of encouragement. Therefore, encouragement plays a significant role in fostering positive attitudes such as confidence, inspiration, and hope (Nasr et al., 2018; Wong, 2015).

#### **2.5.1.5 Listening**

Listening involves actively acquiring and understanding a message from another person (Hauser & Hughes, 1988). However, listening goes beyond the acquisition and critique of information (Watson et al., 1995). Lipari (2010) suggested that it involves “emptiness” or “openness”, where listeners are sensitive to the needs of people around them and open themselves to others’ perspectives. Listening is closely linked to emotional and empathetic bases, where individuals possess an understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of others and their situations (Mowat et al., 2013). Consequently, deep listening can be a crucial and effective component of care and support in service provision (Mowat et al., 2013). Deep listening therefore contributes to mutual understanding, enhance the quality of communication, and foster positive relationships (Watson et al, 1995).

#### **2.5.2 Employee Communal Orientation and Positive Relational Communications**

Positive relational communication (PRC) behaviours are frequently observed among employees during customer interactions. These behaviours are characterized by their autonomous and spontaneous nature, with a focus on expressing care and concern for the customer (McCarthy, 2000). Such behaviours align with prosocial behaviours that are driven by communal orientation, whereby individuals are naturally inclined to engage in caring and helpful behaviours (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). As such, it is likely that employees’ PRC behaviours are linked to their communal orientations.

Prior research has suggested that employee-customer interactions may be driven by either personality traits or interactional goals (Tracy & Naughton, 2000). Although well-trained employees may possess certain characteristics that contribute to positive communication, such as being courteous and helpful (Cran, 1994), genuinely praise customers and lift them up, and personalizing their services to align with customer expectations (Karatepe et al., 2007), the motivational factors behind these behaviours have not been explored. Some forms of communication may be driven by employee exchange motives, such as the desire for higher tips (Seiter & Dutson, 2007). However, it is also reasonable to assume that positive communication may stem from employees' intrinsic tendencies, particularly their communal orientations toward clients.

Employees with a high communal orientation may feel compelled to engage in caring and helping behaviours during service encounters, driven by their biological predisposition towards prosocial behaviours (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). This is contrast to other factors that may influence employee behaviour, such as self-regulation (Huynh et al., 2008), opportunism (Goodwin, 1996), or moral preference (Capraro & Rand, 2018). Through adopting an interaction norm of “being personal without being too private” during customer interactions (Schön Persson, et al., 2018), these employees are more willing to be transparent, listen to others, and increase mutual understanding, making it easier to meet clients' emotional needs. This may even lead to the development of communal relationships or strong friendships with clients (Goodwin, 1996; Gremler et al., 2001; Price & Arnould, 1999).

Motivation for caring is a complex process, but in this study, the focus was on the extent to which PRC behaviours are attributed to communal orientation. This exploration



responds to the call to investigate how biology and genetics shape positive interpersonal communication (Socha, 2019). Employees with a high communal orientation may be more likely to demonstrate communicative care towards their clients compared to their non-communal coworkers. Understanding the motivational factors behind employee PRC behaviours may inform the development of training programs and management strategies that promote positive communications and enhance customer satisfaction and employee experience as well.

### **2.5.3 Positive Relational Communications and Employee Well-Being**

Relational communications serve important social functions for both customers and employees (Nasr et al., 2018; Suhail & Srinivasulu, 2020). From a frontline perspective, employee relational communications not only help develop communality in a normal service encounter (Goodwin, 1996) but also facilitate a communal sense of well-being at work (Schön Persson et al., 2018). Based on these findings, the present study investigated how frontline employees may benefit from a variety of PRC communications with customers in hospitality service settings. This study aimed to respond to Mirivel's (2019) call for a deeper understanding of positive communications in a broader range of contexts beyond the traditional focus on customer satisfaction and loyalty (Eger & Mičák, 2017).

#### **2.5.3.1 Asking and Well-Being**

Asking purposeful and personalized questions has been linked to well-being because it fosters experiences of deep connection (Mirivel, 2019). This is because selective and insightful questioning is driven by the human desire for connection and relationships (Rains & Tukachinsky, 2015). In the context of customer contact, employees who ask purposeful and personalized questions demonstrate their competence and engagement, which can help

build mutual understanding and common ground with clients (Koester, 2006). Asking questions, therefore, brings them closer. In a caregiving context, such as in social support, casual questioning can be seen as part of the treatment itself (Coupland, 2000). Asking personal and caring questions, if done genuinely, can build solidarity, alleviate stress, and deepen the connection for both parties. This facilitates a shared or collaborative coping process, where the stressor is perceived as “our problem” (Areguy et al., 2019).

### **2.5.3.2 Complimenting and Well-Being**

Compliments have a profound effect on both the sender and the receiver (Matsuoka, 2002; Mirivel, 2019). When employees offer genuine compliments to their clients, they not only boost their clients’ sense of self and well-being (Mirivel, 2019), but also reflect the employees’ altruistic tendencies at work (Otto et al., 2005). While complimenting clients may seem like a calculated behaviour, it can be a sincere expression of the employees’ kindness (Curry et al., 2018) and honest reaction to the client (Payne et al., 2002). Moreover, it can be the employees’ communal choice to positively affect customers rather than setting a stage for winning the sale or giving back, as noted by Mirivel (2019). In the hospitality industry, employees often make clients happy in the norm of voluntariness (Goodwin, 1996) and experience a sense of personal fulfillment in this process. This notion is supported by Curry et al.’s (2018) findings on the causal connection between performing acts of kindness and the actor’s subjective well-being including improved happiness, life satisfaction, and positive affect.

### **2.5.3.3 Self-Disclosing and Well-Being**

Employee disclosure can have positive well-being outcomes, including improved communication effectiveness as well as mutual understanding (Myers & Bryant, 2002) and

authentic understanding (Price et al., 1995). Mutual understanding can be achieved through self revelation, as employees and clients have a personal recognition of each other's needs and specific details (Myers & Bryant, 2002). This recognition can lead to increased trustworthiness (Wheless & Grotz, 1977), positive word-of-mouth behaviour (Gremier et al., 2001), and satisfaction of employee psychological needs. Disclosing employees feel affirmed and cared for, which enhances their meaningful experience at work (Antonovsky, 1996; Schön Persson et al., 2018). Self-disclosure can also lead to authentic understanding, where "service provider and client engage in self-revelation, expend emotional energy, and connect as individuals" (Price et al., 1995, p. 92). By disclosing and listening, employee-customer connections may occur (Czepiel, 1990) and relational ties form over time, benefiting the employee in the long term (Söderlund, 2020).

#### **2.5.3.4 Encouraging and Well-Being**

Hospitality settings are known for promoting mutual encouragement, which can lead to relationship development due to the transactional advantages it offers (Nasr et al., 2018). When customers give positive feedback and express gratitude, service providers feel encouraged and motivated. Hospitality employees can also benefit from offering encouragement to their clients, as it is a tangible act of giving (Mirivel, 2019). Encouragement is often used by employees who choose to deepen relationships with clients as a way to show care and support (Mirivel, 2019). In communal conditions, caring behaviour is autonomous and rewarding for the giver (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010), who is likely to receive personal and relationship rewards from their actions (Le et al., 2013). This is also true for employees in hospitality settings, where encouraging clients can lead to relationship satisfaction and personal benefits (Le et al., 2013; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010).

By emphasizing the desire to provide support, encouraging others in hospitality settings can create a positive and fulfilling environment for both employees and clients.

#### **2.5.3.5 Listening and Well-Being**

Active listening is a valuable skill that can benefit both the listener and the person being heard. It involves showing appreciation and interest in others, which is key to building relationships (Bodie, 2012). In fact, listening is important in both intimate and professional relationships, signaling affection, responsiveness, understanding, empathy, and support (Bodie, 2012; Fassaert et al., 2007). Active listening also indicates a commitment to enhancing relational satisfaction by actively engaging with the other person (Fassaert et al., 2007), and good listeners are often liked and seen as more attractive (Argyle & Cook, 1976). This can lead to greater trust and higher quality personal relationships (Mechanic & Meyer, 2000). In the workplace, active listening is crucial and can increase the likelihood of upward mobility (Sims, 2017).

In the hospitality industry, listening can be a powerful tool when approached as a caring and deeply meaningful action. Evidence from customer perspectives suggested that employees (e.g., hairdressers) who encourage their clients to talk about themselves and listen to them may benefit from the interaction (McCarthy, 2000). While listening can create a sense of intimacy and connection, it can sometimes feel like a psychological burden for the listener (Greene et al., 2006). However, listening and disclosing can be reciprocal so that both parties benefit from the interaction. Disclosers may feel validated and understood, enhancing their sense of self-worth (Greene et al., 2006; Ho et al., 2018). When employees take turns disclosing and listening, these positive effects may hold true for both parties.

#### **2.5.4 The Role of Positive Relational Communication in Shaping Employee Well-Being**

Employee PRC behaviours may play a crucial role in mediating the relationship between communal orientation and employee well-being. According to positive psychology research (Socha & Beck, 2015), engaging in prosocial behaviours can enhance personal well-being. In the context of hospitality settings, employees' PRC behaviours during customer contacts may be influenced by their communal orientations, which can promote their personal well-being.

The norms that guide employee PRC behaviours may vary based on individuals' relationship orientations (Clark & Mills, 2011). Employees with a high communal orientation may be more likely to communicate with clients in autonomous, caring norms that align with the service setting, leading to high-frequency PRC behaviours such as asking personal and caring questions, deep listening, and providing encouragement when clients are in need (Huynh et al., 2008). PRC behaviours in service contexts may have positive effects on personal well-being, including reduced stress, increased happiness, and overall well-being outcomes (Curry et al., 2018; Fassaert et al., 2007; Mirivel, 2019; Trepte et al., 2018). Employee caring behaviours that stem from communal orientation may benefit employees more than obligatory responses to customer needs (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010).

Adherence to communal norms by both relationship partners is undeniably important for positive communication norms and enjoyable relational interactions (Clark & Mills, 2011). However, situations may arise where the client is not communal oriented or does not collaborate in the communal norm, reducing the employee's willingness to engage in relational communications. Nonetheless, communal norms can still be used in the absence of a communal relationship (Aggarwal & Law, 2005), such as when an employee

offers a sincere compliment, or when a client expresses genuine gratitude or caring to the employee. Customer initiations and responses can determine a new level for subsequent effects of employee positive perceptions of service encounter on their well-being outcomes (Karazsia & Berlin, 2018). Thus, in addition to the direct effect of PRC behaviours on employee well-being, customer positive communication behaviours may also play a role in enhancing employee well-being in the business relationship context.

## **2.6 Employee Communal Orientation and Employee Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions**

Perceiving that a partner responds positively to one's needs may be critical for communal-oriented individual's experience in a relationship (Clark & Mills, 2011). In healthcare settings, perceived social closeness resulting from a service interaction can facilitate employee experience of motivation (Schön Persson et al., 2018). However, little research has been conducted on the perceptions of hospitality employees, particularly those with a strong communal orientation, during customer interactions, and how these perceptions relate to their well-being. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the mechanism underlying the relationship between employee communal orientation and well-being by examining hospitality employees' perceptions of customer interactions.

### **2.6.1 Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions**

People form initial perceptions of others during their interactions. Research indicated that positive perceptions (e.g., emotional closeness) among employees during service encounters can lead to the development of positive relationships with clients (Horan & Bryant, 2019; Schön Persson et al., 2018), resulting in benefits for the employees themselves (Gremier et al., 2001; Nasr et al., 2018). However, it remains unclear what

exactly hospitality employees perceive during these interactions. The theory of predicted outcome value (POV), developed by Sunnafrank in 1986 and 1988, provides a framework for addressing this issue by focusing on relational outcome values that are developed during initial interactions.

Building on the POV framework (Sunnafrank, 1986), this study conceptualized *employee perceptions of customer interactions* (PCI) as individual employees' impressions or judgements of their service encounters with customers in terms of relational outcomes, including perceived intimacy, task-social orientation (or social orientation), information seeking, and customer authenticity. By examining these dynamics, researchers can gain insights into employee experiences within everyday service encounters.

#### **2.6.1.1 Perceived Intimacy**

*Perceived intimacy* is a complex perception of relational messages, which includes immediacy, similarity, and receptivity (Walther & Burgoon, 1992). *Immediacy* refers to feelings of affection and inclusion, *similarity* reflects the degree to which people share personal information with each other and know about each other, and *receptivity* refers to expressions of support, openness, and a desire to be trusted (Walther & Burgoon, 1992). There are several elements within a typical service encounter that can help generate intimacy. For example, personalizing conversations, expressing emotional needs, providing discretionary care and help, and spending more time with clients can all indicate intimacy (Manzo, 2015).

#### **2.6.1.2 Perceived Task-Social Orientation**

*Task-social orientation* refers to the extent to which service encounters reflect employees' primary concern as either transaction goal or communal relationship (Goodwin,

1996). Task-oriented encounters are mainly intended for carrying out work roles, while social-oriented encounters are concerned with maintaining or strengthening relationships (Burgoon & Hale, 1987). All encounters are located at different points on a continuum between “task” and “social”, depending on the use of service or personal scripts.

A task-oriented encounter heavily depends on service scripts (or programmed personal scripts) that are tightly designed to address service. Service scripts offer a well-established behavioural guide, often resulting in standardized and well-rehearsed service delivery (e.g., high-volume services like drive-throughs) (Schank & Abelson, 1977). In contrast, social-oriented encounters on the other end of the continuum are largely navigated by personal scripts (Vilnai-Yavetz & Rafaeli, 2003), which are autonomous and *invested* by either the employee or the client (or both) with the significance of fulfilling relational motivations unrelated to the core service.

#### **2.6.1.3 Perceived Information Seeking**

*Information seeking* in social settings was defined by Berger and Bradac (1982) as deliberate and intentional acts initiated to gather personal information about a human target. Information seeking strategies often take the form of PRC behaviours, including requests for demographic information, reciprocal self-disclosure, and encouragement (Sunnafrank, 1990). Levels of information seeking are represented by the extent to which seekers ask personal and caring questions, encourage self-disclosure, make follow-up comments, and actively pursue information from targets (Ramirez Jr. & Zhang, 2007).

#### **2.6.1.4 Perceived Customer Authenticity**

Authenticity refers to an object that is real, genuine, and sincere (Grayson & Martinec, 2004). The service literature highlights employee authenticity because of its



significant impact on rapport (Lindsey-Hall et al., 2020), yet customer authenticity has been neglected. Authenticity is interactive: employees may also expect their clients to follow the salient norm and provide social cues (e.g., verbal messages, facial expressions) that are real and genuine. Therefore, the present study conceptualized *customer authenticity* as employee perceptions of customer genuineness and realness (Yagil, 2014). Just as customers form impressions of service employees' authenticity, employees may also recognize, perceive, and interpret customer authenticity through the customer's messages and expressions.

### **2.6.2 Employee Communal Orientation and Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions**

Although service interactions often involve stranger or acquaintance-level relationships (Cho, 2013), it is possible for individual employees to have both communal and exchange relationships with the same customer (Mills & Clark, 1994). Goodwin (1996) argued that a communal relationship between an employee and a customer may alter the nature of service by changing how they perceive and respond to each other. However, the communal orientation literature has not fully examined this hybrid relationship and its lasting effect on employee experiences. Specifically, it remains unclear to what extent employees' communal orientations relate to their perceptions of customer interactions.

#### **2.6.2.1 Employee Communal Orientation and Perceived Intimacy**

Experiences of intimacy can be linked to the fulfillment of relationship motivation. Employees high in communal orientation may be more inclined to develop feelings of intimacy during customer interactions. This is because communal orientation is associated with emotional expression, with such employees being more transparent and willing to

reveal themselves and express their emotional needs (Le et al., 2013). As a result, it is more likely for them to develop relationship intimacy with clients.

In addition, due to the projection effect of communal responsiveness (Murray et al., 1996), employees high in communal orientation may assume that their clients harbor similar sentiments of care and support for them (Lemay & Clark, 2008). Consequently, they may feel grateful and “obliged” (i.e., a sense of duty) to provide additional care to their clients. Giving care to each other is an essential mechanism for developing closeness (Medvene et al., 1997). The more discretionary care offered, the greater the likelihood that intimacy will develop in the employee-customer relationship.

#### **2.6.2.2 Employee Communal Orientation and Perceived Task-Social Orientation**

The social orientation of a service encounter may be linked to the employee’s relationship orientation. Robust findings have consistently shown that employees who value interpersonal relationships tend to incorporate compliments, small talk, and anecdotes into their personal scripts (Coupland, 2000; Echeverri & Salomonson, 2017). These personal scripts can help humanize and personalize a task-oriented encounter, making it more personal, social, and communal (Coupland & Ylance-McEwen, 2000; Gremler et al., 2001).

Hospitality employees who seek communal relationships, though episodic, tend to initiate task-focused conversations with clients that may shift towards the social end of the continuum and even become communally motivated interactions (Coupland, 2000; Goodwin, 1996). For instance, employees who encourage customer self-disclosure tend to do so based on their communal orientations, which in turn affects the social orientation of the service interaction (Söderlund, 2020). Overall, the employee’s communal orientation may play a role in shaping the social orientation of a service encounter, and these

employees are more likely to incorporate social and communal aspects into their customer interactions.

### **2.6.2.3 Employee Communal Orientation and Perceived Information Seeking**

Communal-oriented employees are naturally inclined to help and care for others and seeking information from clients may reflect this tendency. They may have a greater ability and willingness to use information-seeking strategies. By locating their clients' needs and providing assistance, communal-oriented employees can enhance mutual understanding and offer the most suitable solutions to satisfy their clients' needs (Schön Persson et al., 2018; Sunnafrank, 1990). In fact, the act of information seeking itself may be a reward in communal relationships. When employees ask their clients caring questions, they not only gather personal information but also demonstrate care and concern. Asking also conveys empathy and creates a sense of warmth, making information seeking a significant communicative moment during their encounters (Mirivel, 2019). Therefore, information seeking may serve as a tool for communal-oriented employees to build relationships with their clients.

### **2.6.2.4 Employee Communal Orientation and Perceived Customer Authenticity**

Employee communal orientation may somewhat shape their perceptions of customer authenticity. Research by Clark and Finkel's (2005) suggested that in close relationships, individuals with a communal orientation tend to be open about their emotions and vulnerabilities, which can signal authenticity. They are sincere and not afraid of revealing personal weaknesses such as fear and anxiety (Jiang et al., 2020; Matthews & Eilert, 2021). Therefore, it is possible that communal-oriented employees perceive their clients as being equally authentic, as they may probably project their own genuineness onto their

relationship partner (Lemay & Clark, 2008). However, the link between communal orientation and perceived authenticity in business relationships is still unclear and requires further investigation (Clark & Finkel, 2005; Jiang et al., 2020; Matthews & Eilert, 2021).

### **2.6.3 Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions and Employee Well-Being**

The impressions that employees form through customer interactions may have an impact on their personal well-being. Even in the initial moments of interaction, impressions of relationships can be developed and endure over time (Berg & Clark, 1986), influencing decisions to either enhance or avoid engagement in those relationships (Sunnafrank, 1988). As Berg and Clark (1986) noted, these impressions can be significant experiences for employees. Even seemingly trivial service encounters can have enduring effects on subjective perceptions and subsequent behaviours. Positive perceptions developed through customer interactions can lead to experiences of meaningfulness, happiness, and satisfaction for employees, as described by Schön Persson et al. (2018). In this sense, the impact of these interactions should not be underestimated.

#### **2.6.3.1 Perceived Intimacy and Employee Well-Being**

Perceived intimacy is an anticipated benefit that arises from specific actions such as asking, disclosing, and listening, and is closely associated with personal well-being (Schön Persson et al., 2018). However, the positive effect of perceived intimacy on well-being may depend on how individuals view the costs and rewards of initiating a personal conversation. According to Sidarus et al. (2019), when individuals decide to self-reveal, they consider various factors such as time, emotional burden, and vulnerability against the expected benefits of feeling close, accepted, and involved. Individuals who have a motivation for closeness are willing to invest their time and take risks to open-up when the expected

benefits outweigh the costs, ultimately experiencing well-being through perceived intimacy (Mirivel, 2019). The rewards of relationship intimacy are so great that investing in it is worthwhile, as it can have a long-lasting effect on psychological well-being (Mirivel, 2019).

There is substantial evidence that support the benefits of perceived intimacy, including feelings of protection (Antonucci, 1990) and security (McCarthy, 2000), which ultimately lead to meaningfulness, happiness, and immediate well-being experiences (Silverman, 2019). As a result, relational intimacy is recognized as being essential for both physical and mental health (Popovic et al., 2003).

### **2.6.3.2 Perceived Task-Social Orientation and Employee Well-Being**

Well-being experiences often arise from social-oriented and humanized service encounters (Schön Persson et al., 2018). This type of service encounter can be achieved through employee discretionary effort to foster communal relationships or by staging personalization. Social interactions motivated by a sense of community enrich participants' experiences and help sustain satisfying relationships (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). Similarly, in hospitality settings, humanized service encounters provide meaning to work for communal-oriented employees, rather than requiring emotional labour from them (Schön Persson et al., 2018).

Notably, job enrichment can lead to a more humanized, social-oriented service encounter through programmed or staged personalization. While such “encounters” enhance customer experience, high levels of programmed entertainment can also become a source of work stress (Nordin et al., 2011). When employees follow staged service scripts and “prepare” their appearances, their emotions are passively suppressed (Hochschild, 1983; Walsh, 2019). Despite this, some scholars hold a positive attitude and view this as an

“investment.” They argued that service scripts based on big-data analysis can help protect frontline employees from emotional dissonance and self-depletion (Chen & Ramirez, 2018). Others claimed that staged personalization can even be beneficial by including social components that create a shared experience for both employees and customers, leading to positive emotions, satisfaction, and commitment (Nasr et al., 2018; Otnes et al., 2012). If this is the case, seemingly opportunistic programmed personalization may have positive effects on employee well-being, just like normed interactions do.

### **2.6.3.3 Perceived Information Seeking and Employee Well-Being**

Information seeking serves various goals in different social contexts (Hogan & Brashers, 2009), reinforcing many social functions such as the development of connectedness (Rains & Tukachinsky, 2015) and the enforcement of social capital (Frampton & Fox, 2021). Selective and in-depth information seeking can help establish connectedness (Rains & Tukachinsky, 2015). Employees who seek to connect with clients are expected to personalize their conversations by asking caring questions or sharing personal anecdotes (Schön Persson et al., 2018). This way information seeking promotes connection through reciprocal care.

People seek care and support through asking and responding (Seidman et al., 2019), as these activities have predominantly affective meanings regardless of whether seeking help or offering support. Perceived care and mutual support can strengthen personal social capital (Frampton & Fox, 2021), which is a significant resource derived and enhanced not only from close relationships but also from ongoing or superficial relationships (Ellison et al., 2011, Putnam, 2000). Even more importantly, social capital gained from weak ties or acquaintances (e.g., business relationships) can have a more significant positive influence

on employee well-being than that obtained from close ties (e.g., family members) (Helliwell & Huang, 2010).

Therefore, through information seeking, hospitality employees may “check out” their clients, thereby experiencing deep connection and enhanced social capital (Ellison et al., 2011; Putnam, 2000; Rains & Tukachinsky, 2015). In this process, communal-oriented employees, who have high levels of offering help (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010) and expect help from others when in need (Clark & Mills, 2011), may demonstrate higher levels of information seeking and more positive emotional responses to clients’ information seeking behaviours. Consequently, employees with a high communal orientation may be more likely to experience well-being during customer interactions.

#### **2.6.3.4 Perceived Customer Authenticity and Employee Well-Being**

Authenticity may be linked to well-being, with perceived customer authenticity contributing to positive employee experiences through enhanced trust (Starr, 2008), mutual support (van den Broeck et al., 2010), and psychological safety (Mendoza, 2007). From the perspective of employees, recognizing a client’s genuine displays of authenticity can improve their encounter experiences (Eagly, 2005). Perceived authenticity can facilitate a satisfaction of mutual trust and elicit a high acceptance of oneself as a person, as claimed by Ryan and Deci (2000). Interaction partners, including employees and customers, are then more willing to self-reveal, be vulnerable, and feel free from hypocrisy (Starr, 2008). Furthermore, by freeing employees from “acting”, the authentic kindness of customers can provide employees with a sense of connection and support, satisfying their inherent needs. Additionally, authenticity promotes safety climate (Grandey et al., 2005), and employee psychological safety predicts work engagement (Olivier & Rothmann, 2007). Employees

who perceive their clients as real and genuine may feel more comfortable and safer to socialize and talk (Mendoza, 2007), and their authentic communications can lead to a mutuality of need support (van den Broeck et al., 2010). This is highly valued by communal-oriented individuals as it solidifies their perceived communal relationship (Clark & Mills, 2011).

#### **2.6.4 The Role of Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions in Shaping Employee Well-Being**

Although service encounters are often brief and superficial, they can still foster communal relationships that serve important relational functions (Gremler et al, 2001; Goodwin, 1996; Yagil, 2008). However, little is known about how communal-oriented employees perceive their interactions and relationships with clients, and how these perceptions relate to their well-being. To address these gaps in the knowledge, the present study investigated employee perceptions of customer interactions (PCI), which may help overcome “evidence biases” (Demerouti et al., 2018). Specifically, the study examined employee PCI perceptions as a mediating mechanism between communal orientation and employee well-being.

Employees’ communal motivations may be related to their PCI perceptions. Employees who have high communal orientations tend to demonstrate prosocial and caring behaviours during customer contacts (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). As a result, they tend to receive and perceive relational outcome values from the clients they have cared for (Le et al., 2013). Furthermore, their experiences within customer interactions – particularly whether the client also cares for the employee – may be shaped by their perception of clients’ responsiveness and social support (Lemay et al., 2007). Finally, when a subjective



friendship-like relationship develops during service interactions, as Goodwin dubbed, “a sense of communality”, it may lead to relationship health and positive well-being outcomes for both customers and employees (Goodwin, 1996; Reis et al., 2004).

Positive PCI perceptions may be positively associated with employee well-being experiences. According to POV theory (Sannafrank, 1986, 1988), employees’ initial PCI perceptions during service encounters can have an important impact on their engagement in ongoing and future relationship development. Positive perceptions may enable employees to derive more personal and relationship rewards from what may otherwise be thought as stressful customer interactions (Xu et al., 2020). These findings and thoughts lend support for the speculation that employees’ higher communal orientations are linked to greater well-being outcomes and their positive PCI perceptions serve as a potential mediating mechanism in this link.

## **2.7 Research Gaps, Hypotheses, and Implications**

The present enquiry was initiated due to the specific concerns regarding employee well-being in the hospitality industry (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). Although the existing service literature has primarily focused on customer perspectives (Nasr et al., 2018) and negative views on customer contact (Hochschild, 1983; Grandey et al., 2013; Hülshager & Schewe, 2011), the present study examined the employee viewpoint and took a positive perspective on employee-customer interactions.

The relationship literature has extensively explored communal orientation in various relationship contexts (Mills et al., 2004), and the link between communal orientation and personal well-being has been well established (Le et al, 2013; Le et al., 2018). However, communal orientation in business relationship contexts, such as in hospitality scenarios, has

been overlooked. Specifically, there is a lack of understanding of how employee communal orientations potentially impact customer interactions and benefit the employee.

Furthermore, the literature on the relationship between communal orientation and well-being outcome has yielded inconsistent findings (Areguy et al., 2019). How do frontline employees with a high communal orientation benefit from their relationship orientations? A growing body of research suggests that those with a high communal orientation tend to exhibit behavioural efforts that prioritize the needs of others (Weinstein & Ryan, 2010) and develop positive perceptions of the responsiveness and support received from others during this process (Lemay et al., 2007). Therefore, communal orientation may benefit frontline employees through their behaviours and perceptions during customer interactions.

Along these lines, the present study investigated how employee communal orientation manifests in hospitality scenarios and contributes to positive employee well-being outcomes. This exploration aimed to address the alluded research gaps by identifying employee PRC behaviours and PCI perceptions as mediating mechanisms in the link between communal orientation and employee well-being. To achieve this purpose, the study focused on the following research hypotheses, which are also presented in the model of hypotheses, concepts, and measurement in Figure 2.

***H1:*** There will be a significant positive association between employee communal orientation and employee well-being.

Based on the communal orientation literature, the first hypothesis posits that communal orientation (IV) is a resource that hospitality employees can leverage to promote well-being (DV). Specifically, it is anticipated that employee communal orientation would

be negatively associated with burnout and the need for recovery, while positively associated with work engagement, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction.

**H2.** The association between communal orientation and employee well-being will be mediated by employee positive relational communication (PRC) behaviours.

The second research hypothesis proposes that employee PRC behaviours, including asking, complimenting, self-disclosing, encouraging, and listening, may serve as a mediating mechanism through which communal orientation is linked to employee well-being outcomes. It is hypothesized that communal orientation is related to employee PRC behaviours, which may, in turn, facilitate the emergence of positive well-being experiences for the employee.

**H3.** The association between communal orientation and employee well-being will be mediated by employee perceptions of customer interactions (PCI).

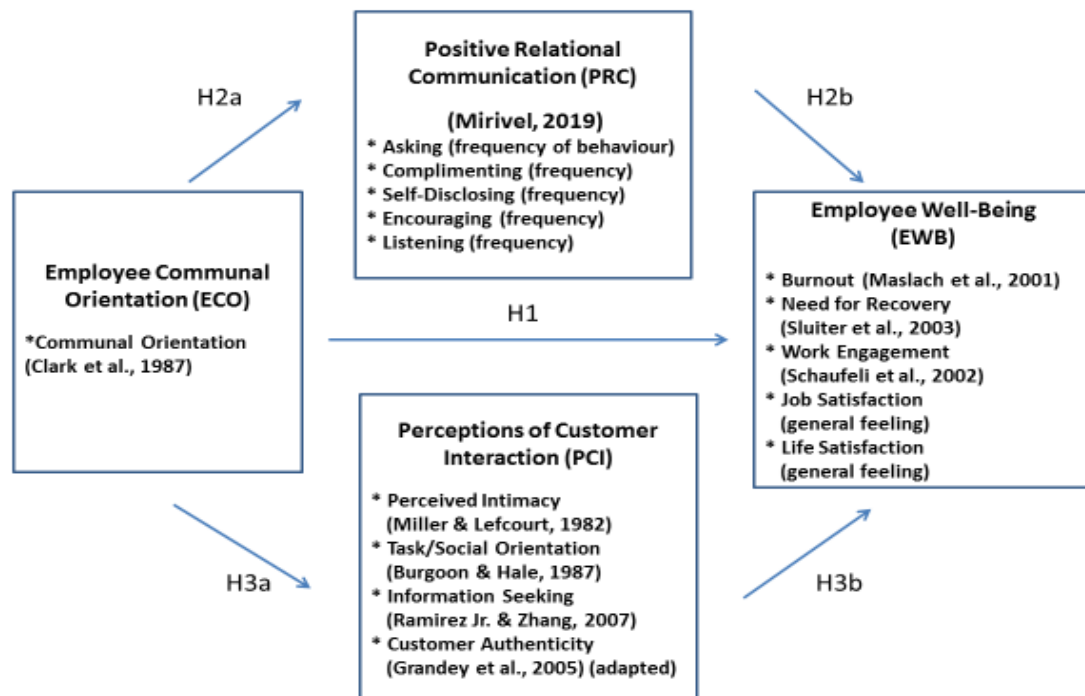
The third hypothesis suggests that employee PCI perceptions, which include perceived intimacy, task-social orientation, information seeking, and customer authenticity, may act as a mediating mechanism linking communal orientation to employee well-being. It is hypothesized that such PCI perceptions of the service encounters characterized by employee PRC behaviours may explain the relationship between employee communal orientations and positive well-being experiences.

The findings of the study may reveal that communal orientation is significantly positively associated with personal well-being. This implies that emphasizing communal orientation in customer interactions can be a valuable resource for promoting well-being experiences for hospitality frontline employees. Given the significance of frontline well-being for service quality and business success (Sirgy, 2019; Uysal et al., 2020), these

findings may provide insight into how recruitment efforts in the service and hospitality industry should target individuals with a high communal orientation, and whether this approach should be proactively developed and fostered. Furthermore, examining the mechanisms of PRC behaviours and PCI perceptions can help improve the attitudes and performance of frontline employees in the services and hospitality industry. By learning to engage in communication patterns that support their intrinsic fulfillment, frontline employees can prevent the negative effects of customer contact from affecting their quality of life. The ultimate purpose of the study is to enhance employee well-being, and hospitality frontline employees deserve this focus in their own right.

**Figure 2**

*Model of Hypotheses, Concepts, and Measurements*



*Note.* H1 = Hypothesis 1, H2 = Hypothesis 2, H3 = Hypothesis 3, H2a = a path of the Hypothesis 2, H2b = b path of the Hypothesis 2. H3a = a path of the Hypothesis 3, H3b = b path of the Hypothesis 3.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methods**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between communal orientation and well-being in hospitality employees, and to explore the mediating roles of employee PRC behaviours and PCI perceptions in this relationship. To achieve this, the study examined the relationships among communal orientation, employee well-being outcomes, and employee PRC behaviours and PCI perceptions. The study aimed to identify the mechanisms underlying employee wellbeing in the context of service encounters. Quantitative research methods were employed in this study, and an online survey was used to collect the necessary data.

The study utilized an analytical cross-sectional research design. Cross-sectional quantitative studies aim to collect data from a population sample at a single point of time, with both exposures and outcomes measured simultaneously (Setia, 2016). The present study also employed analytical strategies to identify whether communal orientation is a critical factor for well-being outcomes (Setia, 2016). This design was chosen because the study aimed to not only examine communal orientation as an independent variable but also to compare its effects on employee behaviours, perceptions, and overall well-being at work and in general life.

Survey data were collected from frontline employees working in the hospitality industry on Hainan Island, China. The questionnaires were administered using Wen Juan Xing, an online survey platform widely used in China. Participants were asked to complete questions about their relationship orientations and subjective well-being experiences. They also self-reported their PRC behaviours and PCI perceptions of service encounters they had

with customers on the previous day of work. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were performed in the study. Linear regression models were used to examine (1) the relationship between communal orientation and employee well-being and (2) the mediating roles played by employee PRC behaviours and PCI perceptions in this link.

### **3.1 Population and Sample Selection**

The population for this study consists of frontline workers in the hospitality industry on Hainan Island, China. As the most popular tropical tourism destination in China, Hainan Island is located at the southern tip of the mainland and boasts a pleasant climate, rich marine and coastal resources, unique cultural heritage, and high-quality tourism infrastructure (Liu & Wall, 2003). The tourism and hospitality industry on the island has rapidly developed and expanded, with annual arrivals reaching 83.14 million in 2019 (before the Covid-19 Pandemic) and tourism income totaling 105 billion Yuan (equivalent to approximately 15 billion US dollars), which accounted for 20% of Hainan's total GDP (Hainan Provincial Bureau of Statistics & National Bureau of Statistics Hainan Investigation Team, 2019). The tourism and hospitality sector directly employed more than 42,000 people, making it a pillar industry in the local economy (CEIC, 2017).

The study targeted at hospitality frontline employees in Hainan for multiple reasons. First, there is little understanding in terms of the potential benefits of having a communal orientation within business relationship contexts and the hospitality industry can offer valuable insights into this area. Hospitality service settings are appealing and revealing in this regard. Second, positive relational communication between service workers and their clients is a common occurrence in luxurious resorts, hotels, fine dining restaurants, and cruises, which are abundant on Hainan Island. The Island's slow-paced culture and relaxed

atmosphere may also encourage informal communal relationships between vacationers and service providers. Finally, employee well-being and work stress are of great concern in the hospitality (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019; Rivkin et al., 2018; Schmidt et al., 2016), probably including in Hainan. Observations among hospitality employees on this typical tourist destination may help address research questions and generalize findings to a larger population.

Convenience sampling method was adopted for this study to approach the population due to its low cost, quick administration, and high response rates (Bryman, 2016; Stratton, 2021). Prospective participants were selected through convenience sampling, where participants who met the recruitment criteria and were available were referred to the researcher to participate in the study (Stratton, 2021). With many years of hospitality management experience, the researcher received great support from her former colleagues, making the target population easily accessible. From August 2022 to October 2022, a total of 653 hospitality frontline employees from 23 hospitality enterprises, including 12 hotels and resorts, 1 cruise line company, 6 restaurants, 1 provincial park, 1 shopping mall, and 2 recreation centers, participated in the survey. They all worked in direct-customer-contact job positions, such as hotel receptionists, housekeeping attendants, butlers, concierges, food and beverage servers, recreation workers, and other entertainment service staff. Raw data were screened and checked for duplicates, missing data, errors, and outliers prior to analysis. Cases were removed if some participants in some way avoided filling out questionnaires, provided consistent patterns of responses, or fabricated data. Ultimately, a clean dataset of 610 individuals was sifted out and used for analysis.

### **3.2 Data Collection Procedures**

Once ethics clearance was granted, the researcher contacted her former colleagues, who are now hospitality managers, to explain the purpose of the study and seek their support in recruiting and inviting participants. These contacts lent a great deal of help to the researcher. They aided in (1) selecting direct-customer-contact employees from their rosters and (2) sending prospective participants voice messages and online survey link via WeChat to invite them to participate in the study. WeChat is a popular and versatile social media app and messaging platform in China. The survey link shared on WeChat directed participants to a questionnaire hosted on Wen Juan Xing, the largest online survey platform in China. Wen Juan Xing, so called a Chinese version of SurveyMonkey and Qualtrics, is widely employed by both research institutes and industries. The present study chose Wen Juan Xing due to its compatibility with social media and its ability to distribute remuneration. The survey questionnaire hosted by Wen Juan Xing could be shared through WeChat with cash incentives attached as “red packets”. After completing the survey, participants were directed to a separate window where they could click a WeChat link to receive a gratitude tip of 2.88 Yuan automatically transferred to their respective WeChat account.

There may be opportunities to extend this study’s cross-sectional design to a two-wave study, allowing the researcher to collect longitudinal data on the same participants over time. Therefore, to enable follow-up data collection, every participant was asked to enter a personal code consisting of the first letters of their mother’s full name (Pinyin) and the number representing the month of the participants’ birthday. This personal code allowed the research to match participants’ data across the two waves of data collection. Only participants whose personal code is matched for both waves are included in the analysis. To



incentivize participants to stay on the panel and complete both waves of data collection, those who do not drop out will be awarded 5.88 Yuan. As many participants may be hesitant to provide their email addresses, using a personal code may be a more effective method for follow-up data collection.

### **3.3 Measures**

The survey questionnaire consisted of 50 questions. Socio-demographic questions were asked to gather personal characteristics such as sex, gender identity, age, education background, working experience, and job positions. These socio-demographic and job-related characteristics were used as control variables in the study. Then the participants responded to questions related to their communal orientations, PRC behaviours, PCI perceptions, and well-being experiences.

The present study examined the mediating roles of employee PRC behaviours and PCI perceptions in the relationship between Communal Orientation (IV) and Employee Well-Being (DV). To measure employee PRC behaviours, the frequencies of asking, complimenting, disclosing, encouraging, and listening were assessed. Employee PCI perceptions were measured using 4 subscales: perceived intimacy, task-social orientation, information seeking, and customer authenticity. Communal Orientation measured participants' general relationship orientations towards helping and caring for others. Employee Well-Being was composed of self-reported burnout, need for recovery, work engagement, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction. All continuous variables were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" (or "1 = not at all") to "5 = strongly agree" (or "5 = extremely").

### **3.3.1 Control Variables**

Sex as a dichotomous variable was denoted by male = 1, female = 2. Gender Identity was coded as: male = 1, female = 2, genderqueer/gender non-confirming/gender non-binary/gender fluid = 3, two-spirited = 4, none of above = 5. Age was coded as: under 18 years old = 1, 18-24 years old = 2, 25-34 years old = 3, 35-44 years old = 4, and 45 years or older = 5. Education Background was coded categorically as: high school diploma and under = 1, college degree = 2, Bachelor's degree = 3, and Master's and Post-Graduate degree = 4. Years of Work Experience in the Hospitality Industry was coded categorically as: less than 1 year = 1, 1-2 years = 2, 2-10 years = 3, and more than 10 years = 4. Job Position was dummy recoded into 6 discrete dichotomous categories: Hotel, Restaurant, Cruise ship, Recreation, Retailing, and Park. Each job position category was coded as either present (1) or absent (0).

### **3.3.2 Employee Communal Orientation Measure**

The Communal Orientation Scale (COS) developed by Clark et al. (1987) was utilized to measure employee Communal Orientation – their tendencies to provide and seek responsiveness/support non-contingently. The COS is a self-report instrument designed to measure individual differences in Communal Orientation (Clark et al., 1987). In this study, employee Communal Orientation was measured using a subset of 10 items selected from the original 14-item COS scale. The selection was made based on factor analysis outcomes (Hughes & Snell, 1990; Mathwick, 2002) – higher factor-loading items were selected as they are more likely to represent the characteristic of individuals (Bandalos, 2018). Participants were asked to rate how they respond to others' needs and what they expect from others using items such as “I often go out of my way to help another person”, “When

people get emotionally upset, I tend to avoid them”, “I am not the sort of person who often comes to the aid of others”, and “It bothers me when other people neglect my needs”. The reliability of the Communal Orientation measure was found to be satisfactory ( $\alpha = .75$ ).

### **3.3.3 Hospitality Employee Well-being Measures**

Hospitality Employee Well-Being was operationalized by measuring work-related well-being and context-free well-being. Work-related well-being was assessed by burnout, need for recovery, work engagement, and job satisfaction (Soh et al., 2016). Context-free well-being was measured by self-reported life satisfaction.

**Burnout.** An adapted version of the 9-item Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach et al., 2001) was used to measure Burnout. The items of the MBI that overlapped with the Need for Recovery were excluded, leaving 6 items to test 3 dimensions of Burnout. *Emotional exhaustion* was assessed by the items “I feel emotionally drained by my work” and “I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day at work”. *Depersonalization* was assessed by the items “I have become less enthusiastic about my work” and “I doubt the significance of my work”. *Self-efficacy* was measured by the items “I can effectively solve the issues that arise in my service job” and “In my opinion, I am a good employee”. The reliability of the Burnout measure was found to be acceptable ( $\alpha = .70$ ).

**Need for Recovery.** The scale used to measure participants’ Need for Recovery was an adaptation of the 11-item “Need for Recovery After Working Time” scale (NFR) (Sluiter et al., 2003). After removing items that overlapped with the Burnout subscale, 3 items were selected: “After a working day I am often too tired to start other activities”, “I find it hard to relax at the end of a working day”, and “In general, it takes me over an hour to feel fully recovered after work” ( $\alpha = .78$ ).

**Work Engagement.** The scale used to measure Work Engagement was adapted from Schaufeli et al.'s (2002) employee version of the Work Engagement Scales (WES). To capture the 3 underlying dimensions of engagement (vigor, dedication, and absorption), 3 items were selected from the WES. The items selected were “When I serve my clients at work, I feel bursting with energy” for vigor, “I find my work full of meaning and purpose” for dedication, and “Time flies when I am serving my clients” for absorption ( $\alpha = .69$ ).

**General Job Satisfaction.** General Job Satisfaction was assessed using a single question: “How happy are you at work?” This question provided a straightforward measure of participants’ overall levels of satisfaction and happiness in their work.

**Overall Life Satisfaction.** Overall Life Satisfaction was assessed by a global question: “How satisfied are you with your life?” Participants responded to the questions of job satisfaction and life satisfaction on 5-point scales ranging from *not at all* to *extremely*.

### **3.3.4 Frequencies of Positive Relational Communication (PRC) Behaviours**

The art of positive communication model (Mirivel, 2019) was used to assess the frequency of employee PRC behaviours. The model identified 5 message behaviours as indicators of positive relational dynamics during service encounters: asking personal or caring questions, offering compliments, self-disclosing personal information, using encouraging words and messages, and active listening as a discretionary choice. Participants were asked to recall how often they engaged in these behaviours with customers during the previous workday. Although this approach did not provide a highly precise measure of occurrence, it can offer insight into frontline employees’ behaviours and experiences in their daily service routines ( $\alpha = .88$ ).

### 3.3.5 Perceptions of Customer Interactions (PCI) Measures

The participants were asked to reflect on their communication experiences during service encounters and provide their subjective perceptions of those encounters.

**Perceived Intimacy.** Employee Perceived Intimacy was measured using 6 intensity scales from Miller Social Intimacy Scale (MSIS) (Miller & Lefcourt, 1982). The MSIS is suitable for hospitality scenarios because it is appropriate for both geographically close and distant relationships, in the contexts of both friendship and initial acquaintance (Emmers-Sommer, 2004; Miller & Lefcourt, 1982). Perceived Intimacy was measured on 3 dimensions: immediacy (affection), similarity (understanding), and receptivity (support). Participants rated their agreement with statements such as “How affectionate do you feel towards them” (affection), “How important is it to you that they can understand your feelings?” (understanding), and “How much do you feel like being encouraging and supportive to them when they are unhappy?” (support) ( $\alpha = .83$ ).

**Task-Social Orientation.** Task-Social Orientation was measured using the 3-item Task vs. Social Orientation Subscale of Burgoon and Hale’s (1987) Relational Messages Scale (RMS). Participants rated their level of agreement with the following statements: “I feel that my clients are more interested in a social conversation than the task at hand”, “I feel that I am more interested in working on the task at hand than having a social conversation during our encounters”, and “I am very socially oriented during our encounters”. The second question was reverse coded to ensure that higher scores indicate higher levels of social orientation. Accordingly, this variable is referred to as Social Orientation in the following sections. The Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for this subscale was .56.

**Information Seeking.** Information Seeking was measured using the 6-item Levels of Information Seeking Scale developed by Ramirez Jr. and Zhang (2007). Participants rated the extent to which they engaged in specific behaviours, such as “asking customers questions to get them to open up” and “encouraging customers to disclose personal information while completing the task” ( $\alpha = .73$ ).

**Customer Authenticity.** Perceived Customer Authenticity was assessed using a modified version of the Server Authenticity Scale (SAS) (Grandey et al., 2005). The adapted scale – Customer Authenticity Scale (CAS) – retained the original 2 items but changed the object of measurement from server to customer. The two items are: (1) “Customers often seem to be faking how they feel during our communications” and (2) “Customers often seem to be pretending, or putting on an act, during our interactions”. Responses were reversed and so higher scores represent higher levels of Customer Authenticity ( $\alpha = .60$ ).

### **3.4 Analysis Plan**

An array of descriptive and inferential analyses was conducted to test the research hypotheses presented in the previous chapter. Descriptive statistics were used to provide a general overview of the levels and patterns of Employee Communal Orientation (IV), Employee Well-Being (DV), and Employee PRC Behaviours and Employee PCI Perceptions (potential mediators). Measures of central tendency and variability were reported. Correlation analysis (Correlation matrix) was used to explore the strength and the direction (positive or negative) of the association between IV, DV, and potential mediators. Linear regression was used to test the potential mediators.

As Figure 3 showed, two sets of linear regression models were developed to test the mediating effect of each aspect of the potential mediator in the relationship between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and each measure of Employee Well-Being (DV). Take Employee PCI perceptions for an example. The first model included Gender, Age, Education, Length of Hospitality Experience, and Employee Communal Orientation (IV), while the second model for each set of analysis added dimensions of employee PCI perceptions to examine their potential contributions in explaining any significant association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Employee Well-Being (DV). In total, 5 sets of analyses were conducted, each examining the relationship between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and one measure of Employee Well-Being (DV) as mediated by Employee PCI perceptions. The indirect effect test and bootstrapping process (Hayes, 2013; Preacher & Hayes, 2004, 2008) was employed to test multiple potential mediators, allowing for significance testing and a comparison between mediators.

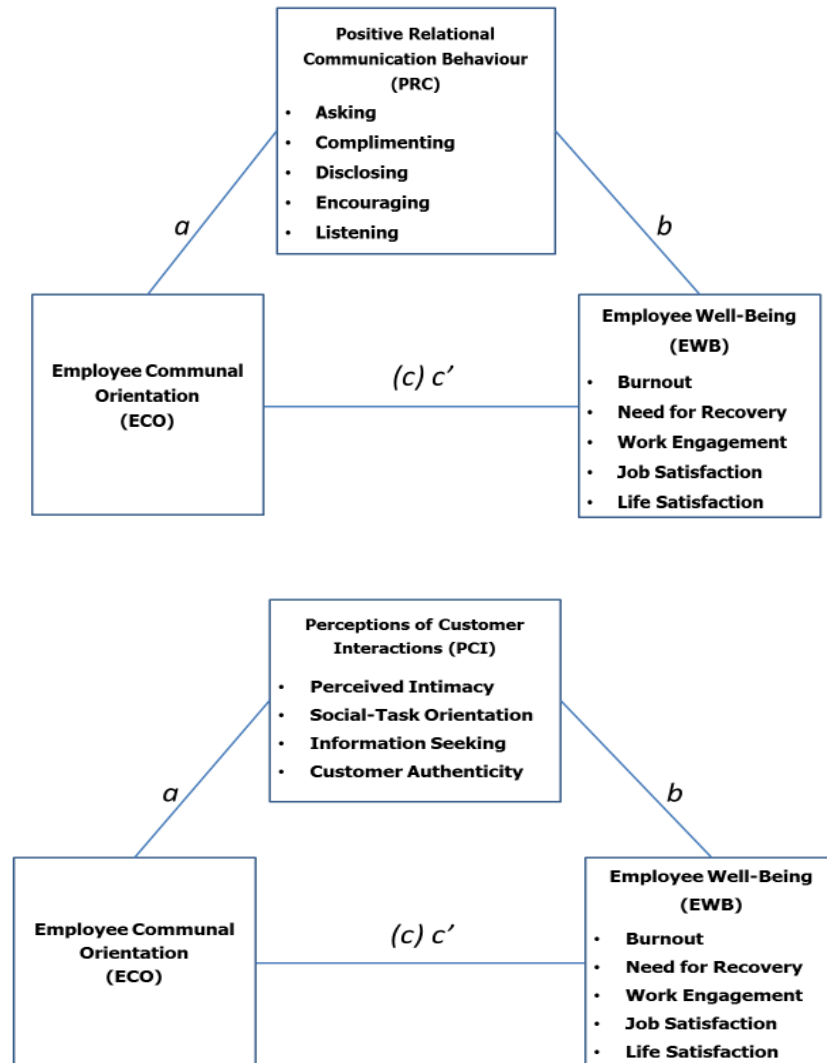
### **3.5 Back Translation**

All items in the questionnaire were initially constructed in English based on the literature review and were translated into Chinese. Then the Chinese translation was back translated into the original language (i.e., English). The equivalence of the original English items and the back-translated items were compared and assessed before finalizing the questionnaire. The equivalence of each set of items (the original or the back-translated) was evaluated in two ways. First, a group of evaluators, consisting of 3 English native speakers, were asked to respond to both questionnaires – one with the original English items and the other with the back-translated Chinese items. Second, the evaluators were asked to assess

the degree of similarity in the meaning for each pair of items. Any meaningful differences between the two were reconciled. Any items found to have issues were rephrased.

**Figure 3**

*Association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Employee Well-Being (DV) Mediated by Employee Positive Relational Communication (PRC) Behaviours and Employee Perception of Customer Interactions (PCI)*



*Note.* *c* = total effect, *c'* = direct effect, *a* = correlation coefficient between communal orientation (IV) and the potential mediator, *b* = the effect of the potential mediator on employee well-being (DV) after controlling for communal orientation (IV).



## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

Findings of this study involved the results of descriptive analysis, bivariate analysis (i.e., correlation), and multivariate analysis (i.e., multiple linear regression). The SPSS version 28.0.1 and PROCESS\_v4.1 (Hayes, 2013, 2018) were used to analyze and interpret data.

#### **4.1 Descriptive Analysis**

##### **4.1.1 Participant Demographic Profile**

Table 2 presented the comparison of sex, gender, age, education, work experience, and job position among participants. Both “sex assigned at birth” and “gender identity” were collected. Sex at birth refers to a person’s reproductive system at birth, while gender is an individual’s personal and social identity as a man, woman or non-binary person (Canada Statistics, 2021). The total dataset included 346 male respondents (56.7%) and 264 females (43.3%). This imbalance in male distribution highlighted the imbalanced sex ratios at birth in China, where in 2007, for example, there were 121.2 boys born for every 100 girls nationally and 129.4 boys for every 100 girls in Hainan (Population Census Office [PCO], 2012).

The survey also captured different genders on a spectrum. Although non-binary individuals may be reluctant to report their gender under China’s collectivist culture, five respondents identified themselves as Genderqueer ( $n = 1$ ) and Two-Spirit ( $n = 4$ ). Two-Spirit is a term that originated and is typically used in First Nations’ cultures and has gained recognition in many indigenous languages. In Taiwan, the Atayal people use “Two-Spirit” to describe a third gender (neither male nor female) in their tribes (Aboriginal Youth Front, 2013). Similarly, non-binary Hainanese people in the present study used “Two-Spirit” as a gender expression.

**Table 2***A Profile of the Sample (N=610)*

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Attribute</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Pct.</b>
Sex	Male	346	56.72
	Female	264	43.28
Gender	Male	340	55.74
	Female	265	43.44
	Genderqueer/Gender non-binary/Gender non-confirming/Gender fluid	1	1.64
	Two-spirited	4	6.56
Age	Under 18 years old	24	3.95
	18 to 24 years old	188	30.97
	25 to 34 years old	164	27.02
	35 to 44 years old	140	23.06
	45 years or older	91	14.99
Education	High school diploma	242	40.67
	College degree	203	34.12
	Bachelor's degree	127	21.34
	Master's and Post-graduate degree	23	3.87
Hospitality Experience	Less than 1 year	118	19.93
Experience	1 to 2 years	151	25.51
	2 to 10 years	200	33.78
	More than 10 years	123	20.78
Job Position	Hotel	276	46.39
	Restaurant/Club/Public bar	141	23.70
	Cruise ship	41	6.89
	Recreation and leisure services	38	6.39
	Retail and car rental	14	2.35
	Theme park/Provincial park	33	5.55
	Other	52	8.74

*Note.* n = number, Pct. = percent, S.D. = standard deviation

Millennials made up the majority of the hospitality workforce, according to the survey. Half of the respondents were aged between 25 and 44, 35% were aged 24 and under, and only 15% were over 45 years old. Around 75% of the total held a high school diploma or school college degree, 21% held a bachelor's degree, and 4% held a master's degree or higher. Approximately 20% of the participants were new to the hospitality industry, 25.5% had 1-2 years of service experience, and over half of the total (54.6%) had been working in hospitality for more than 2 years. The survey included a diverse range of service jobs, with the sample consisting of 46.4% hotel employees, 23.7% food and beverage servers, 6.9% cruise ship attendants, 6.4% recreation and leisure workers, 5.5% provincial park interpreters and workers, 2.4% retail service staff, and 8.7% from other service sectors or job positions (e.g., security guard services).

In summary, all respondents in the survey were full-time customer-contact service workers from a variety of hospitality and service settings on Hainan Island. It is noteworthy that males, Millennials, post-secondary degree holders, and experienced workers (those who have stayed in the hospitality industry for more than 2 years) made up the majority of the hospitality workforce profiled in the study. These characteristics of the sample represent the current tourism and hospitality workforce in China.

#### **4.1.2. A Sketch of Core Measures**

In the study, Employee Communal Orientation was the independent variable (IV). As shown in Table 3, the survey respondents appeared to have a “good” level of communal orientation. Of the 10 items in the Employee Communal Orientation (IV), the mean scores for 7 items were higher than the mid-point of 3 on the 5-point scale, and only 3 items were lower than the mid-point. Respondents may value communal orientation but may also be hesitant to

become too involved in others' lives. For instance, 61% of the respondents believed that "people should go out of their way to be helpful", but in reality, 57% agreed that they "tend to avoid those who get emotionally upset".

**Table 3**

*Features of Independent Variable (IV), Dependent Variables (DV), and Potential Mediators (M)*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
IV: Communal Orientation	3.24	.36
DV: Employee Well-Being		
Burnout	2.62	.67
Need for Recovery	2.96	.91
Work Engagement	3.75	.76
Job Satisfaction	3.90	.85
Life Satisfaction	3.95	.78
M: Employee Positive Relational Communication Behaviours (PRC)		
Asking	2.54	2.84
Complimenting	2.72	2.81
Disclosing	1.68	2.54
Encouraging	2.45	2.97
Listening	3.03	3.19
M: Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions (PCI)		
Perceived Intimacy	3.67	.89
Social Orientation	3.10	.57
Information Seeking	3.04	.56
Customer Authenticity	2.86	.79

*Note.* IV = Independent Variable, DV = Dependent Variable, M = Potential Mediator, SD = Standard Deviation

In the study, Employee Well-Being was the dependent variable (DV) and was measured with five scales: Burnout, Need for Recovery, Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction. The results suggested a positive employee well-being profile (see Table 3). In terms of the negative dimensions of Employee Well-Being, the mean scores for Burnout and Need for Recovery were both close to the mid-point of 3 on a 5-point scale, indicating that work stress was at a moderately low level. Higher scores of Burnout and Need for Recovery would indicate higher levels of work stress. As for the positive dimensions of Employee Well-Being, the mean scores for Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction were all above the mid-point, indicating that employees had good well-being at work and in general life.

One potential mediator examined in the study was employee positive relational communication (PRC) behaviours. Survey respondents were asked to recall the frequency of their PRC behaviours with customers on the previous workday, including asking caring questions, offering compliments, disclosing personal information, providing encouragement, and active listening as a discretionary choice. The frequency of each behaviour ranged from 0 to 14, with frequencies above 15 considered erroneous and coded as missing data. The highest percentage of PRC communications initiated by respondents with their clients were active listening (24%), complimenting (22%), and asking caring questions (20%). A positively skewed distribution was observed, with medians smaller than means and more frequency scores clustered at the low end (i.e., zero). “Zero” appeared most frequently, suggesting that “nothing happened” was a common occurrence during most service encounters. On average, one out of four respondents did not engage in any form of PRC communication with their customers on the previous workday, and one out of three respondents only initiated PRC conversations with their clients once or twice during that day.

The other potential mediator examined in the study was employee perceptions of customer interactions (PCI). As presented in Table 3, respondents' PCI perceptions were complex, with the mean score of Perceived Intimacy being higher than the mid-point of 3 on the scale of 5, Social Orientation and Information Seeking just sitting at the mid-point, and Perceived Customer Authenticity being lower than the mid-point. These apparently contradictory dimensions of perception may be better understood by examining specific survey questions. For example, nearly 70% of respondents believed that customer understanding their feelings and being supportive to them were important or extremely important. However, the same percentage also reported finding it difficult to sense sincerity in their customers or to tell whether their customers were genuine or not.

Normality assumption was examined for inferential statistical procedures as the validity of the results relies on whether the data are normally distributed (Field, 2013). For skewness and kurtosis, an excellent value is between -1 and +1 while a good to moderate value is between -2 and +2 (George & Mallery, 2016). Each continuous variable was analyzed, and their skewness and kurtosis values were all excellent or good, indicating that the data (N = 610) followed a normal distribution.

Reliability analyses were conducted to assess the internal consistency of scales developed with multiple items. The majority of the scales yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .60 to .88, which exceeded the recommended minimum score of .60 (Hair, 1998). However, the scale for Social Orientation ( $\alpha = .56$ ), consisting of only 3 items, fell slightly below the acceptable criterion. It should be noted, however, that low Cronbach's alpha values may not necessarily indicate poor scale reliability, as they can also be influenced by the number of items in the scale (Nunnally, 1978). When the number of the items in the scale is very small,

Cronbach's alpha coefficient can be very low. In this case, Briggs and Cheek (1986) suggested that the mean inter-item correlation for the items should be reported instead, with optimal correlation values falling between .20 and .40. While the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Social Orientation scale was low, the weak correlations between its 3 items ( $r = .26, p < .001$  and  $r = .33, p < .001$ ) suggested that the scale was still reliable.

The study also employed factor analysis to assess the validity of the item measurements in determining employee well-being, specifically focusing on the independent variable and mediators. Results of principle component analysis with varimax rotation revealed a moderate communality without cross loadings. Both the IV (i.e., Communal Orientation) and the significant mediators (i.e., Perceived Intimacy and Social Orientation) were found to be distinct variables, functioning independently from each another (the detailed analysis is not shown).

## **4.2 Correlation Analysis**

Pearson correlation analysis was utilized to examine the relationships between variables in the study. Table 12 presented a summary of the correlation analyses for all variables. The results indicated that overall the correlations among the independent variable (IV), Employee Communal Orientation, the dependent variable (DV), Employee Well-Being, and the mediating variables, employee PRC behaviours and employee PCI perceptions, were statistically significant, except for the correlation between Employee Communal Orientation and employee PRC behaviours. Specifically, none of the employee PRC behaviours were found to be significantly associated with Employee Communal Orientation for the full sample.

### **4.2.1 Age, Gender, and Demographic Factors**

Age and length of hospitality experience showed a positive relationship with Employee Communal Orientation (IV). As presented in Table 4, older employees tended to report higher

communal orientation. More specifically, the group aged 18 to 24 (Gen Z) reported lower levels of communal orientation than the groups aged 25 to 44 (Millennials). Moreover, there was a positive association between hospitality experience and communal orientation, with employees who had longer experience in the industry reporting higher communal orientation. Employees with less than 2 years of experience demonstrated the lowest levels of communal orientation. No significant differences were found among gender and educational background groups.

**Table 4**

*Correlations between Employee Communal Orientation (IV), Employee Well-Being (DV), and Control Variables*

	Communal Orientation	Burnout	Need for Recovery	Work Engagement	Job Satisfaction	Life Satisfaction
Gender (Male)	.06	-.10*	-.13**	-.08*	-.03	-.05
Age	.13**	-.22***	-.11**	.23***	.19***	.18***
Education	.03	.14***	.13**	-.08	-.09*	-.13**
Work Experience	.22***	-.17***	-.08	.21***	.16***	.18***

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

There were demographic group differences in all aspects of Employee Well-Being (DV). As shown in Table 4, being male was negatively related to Burnout, Need for Recovery, and Work Engagement. Compared to their male counterparts, female employees were more engaged but experienced higher burnout and greater need for recovery after work. Older respondents seemed to have better well-being. Age was negatively associated with Burnout and Need for Recovery, while positively associated with Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction. Specifically, the groups aged 24 and below (Gen Z) reported higher burnout, lower work engagement, lower job satisfaction, and lower life satisfaction than other age groups. Higher education may not always be beneficial for hospitality employees. Compared to



high school and college graduates, bachelor’s degree holders experienced higher levels of burnout and need for recovery, while those with master’s and post-graduate certificates reported the lowest life satisfaction. Staying longer in the hospitality industry seemed beneficial for most people. Those who had been working in the hospitality for more than two years at the time of the survey reported lower burnout, higher engagement levels, and higher life satisfaction than their counterparts with less service length in the hospitality industry. The group with 10 plus years of experience reported the highest engagement level.

**Table 5**  
*Correlations between Employee Positive Relational Communication (PRC) Behaviours (Potential Mediator) and Control Variables*

	Asking	Complimenting	Disclosing	Encouraging	Listening
Gender (Male)	-.08	-.11*	-.13**	-.07	-.01
Age	.07	.06	-.01	.08	.01
Education	.09	.10*	.13**	.07	.08
Work Experience	.08	.08	-.01	.05	.02

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

An analysis was conducted to test for differences in the average level of employee PRC behaviours (potential mediator) across demographic groups. Table 5 showed that significant differences were found only in gender and education groups. Female employees and those with higher education tended to exhibit more compliments and disclosure with customers during service encounters.

Table 6 showed the differences in Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions (PCI) (potential mediator) across demographic groups. Gender only influenced Customer Authenticity and had no effect on other perception dimensions. Male respondents tended to perceive their customers as more genuine than females. Age and Work Experience were positively related to

Perceived Intimacy and Social Orientation. Education was only positively related to Information Seeking. Moreover, hotel employees reported higher levels of social orientation and perceived intimacy than did food and beverage service workers.

**Table 6**

*Correlations between Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions (PCI) (Potential Mediator) and Control Variables*

	Perceived Intimacy	Social Orientation	Information Seeking	Customer Authenticity
Gender (Male)	.03	-.03	-.01	.17***
Age	.14***	.11*	.07	.03
Education	.07	-.01	.12**	.01
Work Experience	.20***	.10*	.04	.03

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

#### 4.2.2 IV and DV

Employee Communal Orientation (IV) was found to be statistically correlated with Employee Well-Being (DV), according to Table 7. Specifically, Employee Communal Orientation showed a negative correlation with Burnout and a positive correlation with Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction. Interestingly, no significant correlation was found between Communal Orientation and Need for Recovery, except for a weak negative correlation among retail and car rental service staff. However, given the small sample size of the retail group (only 14 samples), caution should be taken in generalizing this result to a larger population (Faber & Fonseca, 2014).

The dimensions of Employee Well-Being were found to be significantly correlated with each other. Burnout was negatively correlated with Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction. Work Engagement was strongly positively associated with Job Satisfaction

and Life Satisfaction. Moreover, Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction were highly correlated with each other. Need for Recovery was found to be weakly positively correlated with Work Engagement and strongly positively correlated with Burnout.

**Table 7**

*Correlations between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Employee Well-Being (DV)*

	1. Communal Orientation	2. Burnout	3. Need for Recovery	4. Work Engagement	5. Job Satisfaction	6. Life Satisfaction
1. Communal Orientation	--					
2. Burnout	-.24***	--				
3. Need for Recovery	-.06	.54***	--			
4. Work Engagement	.29***	-.27***	.10*	--		
5. Job Satisfaction	.24***	-.31***	-.04	.66***	--	
6. Life Satisfaction	.22***	-.20***	-.04	.51***	.56***	--

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

The correlations between Employee Communal Orientation and Employee Well-Being appeared to vary somewhat from group to group. First, Employee Communal Orientation was more strongly correlated with Employee Well-Being dimensions for food and beverage servers compared to hotel employees. This correlation was also stronger for the Millennials (aged 25-44) than for Gen Z (aged 18-24). Second, the correlations between Employee Communal Orientation and the 3 positive Well-Being dimensions (i.e., Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction) were stronger for females than for males, while the association between Employee Communal Orientation and one negative Well-Being dimension (i.e., Burnout) was stronger for males than for females. Finally, associations between Employee Communal Orientation and Employee Well-Being dimensions were somewhat equivalent across different education and work experience groups.

### 4.2.3 IV and Potential Mediators

The present study aimed to investigate Employee PRC behaviours and Employee PCI perceptions as potential mediators. Table 8 revealed that none of Employee PRC behaviours were significantly associated with Employee Communal Orientation (IV). Hence, Employee PRC behaviour may not mediate the effect of Employee Communal Orientation (IV) on Employee Well-Being (DV). Nevertheless, all Employee PRC behaviours, such as asking, complimenting, disclosing, encouraging, and listening, were strongly and positively related to each other (refer to Table 8).

**Table 8**

*Correlations between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Employee Positive Relational Communication (PRC) Behaviours (Potential Mediator)*

	1.Communal Orientation	2.Asking	3.Complimenting	4.Disclosing	5.Encouraging	6.Listening
1.Communal Orientation	--					
2.Asking	.05	--				
3.Complimenting	.05	.71***	--			
4.Disclosing	-.08	.49***	.51***	--		
5.Encouraging	-.01	.63***	.67***	.62***	--	
6.Listening	.06	.65***	.62***	.51***	.68***	--

*Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$*

As shown in Table 9, all dimensions of Employee PCI perceptions, except for Perceived Customer Authenticity, were found to have a positive association with Employee Communal Orientation (IV). Moreover, all dimensions of Employee PCI perceptions were significantly associated with each other. Specifically, Perceived Intimacy, Social Orientation, and Information Seeking showed a positive association with each other, and all of them were negatively associated with Customer Authenticity.

**Table 9**

*Correlations between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions (PCI) (Potential Mediator)*

	1. Communal Orientation	2. Perceived Intimacy	3. Social Orientation	4. Information Seeking	5. Customer Authenticity
1. Communal Orientation	--				
2. Perceived Intimacy	.45***	--			
3. Social Orientation	.24***	.35***	--		
4. Information Seeking	.21***	.38***	.32***	--	
5. Customer Authenticity	.02	-.22***	-.15***	-.19***	--

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

#### 4.2.4 DV and Potential Mediators

Employee PRC behaviours were somewhat significantly associated with Employee Well-Being (DV), as shown in Table 10. Both Asking and Complimenting behaviour were positively associated with Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction. Encouraging behaviour was weakly positively associated with Work Engagement and Life Satisfaction. However, Disclosing was weakly positively associated with Burnout, while none of the PRC behaviours were significantly associated with Need for Recovery. It is worth noting that all 5 employee PRC behaviours were strongly positively correlated with each other.

**Table 10**

*Correlations between Employee Well-Being (DV) and Employee Positive Relational Communication (PRC) Behaviours (Potential Mediator)*

	1.Burnout	2.Need	3.Engage	4.Job	5.Life	6.Ask	7.Cmp	8.Dis	9.Enc	10.Lis
1.Burnout	--									
2.Need	.54***	--								
3.Engage	-.27***	.10*	--							
4.Job	-.31***	-.04	.66***	--						
5.Life	-.20***	-.04	.51***	.56***	--					
6.Ask	-.05	-.05	.11*	.14**	.12**	--				
7.Cmp	-.02	.02	.13**	.13**	.09*	.71***	--			
8.Dis	.09*	.04	.01	.07	.06	.49***	.51***	--		
9.Enc	.02	-.01	.09*	.08	.12**	.63***	.67***	.62***	--	
10.Lis	-.04	-.04	.05	.08	.08	.65***	.62***	.51***	.68***	--

Note. 1. Burnout 2. Need for Recovery 3. Engagement 4. Job Satisfaction 5. Life Satisfaction 6. Asking 7. Complimenting 8. Disclosing 9. Encouraging 10. Listening

Employee PCI perceptions were found to be significantly associated with Employee Well-Being (DV). As indicated in Table 11, all positive dimensions of Employee Well-Being (i.e., Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction) were positively associated with Perceived Intimacy, Information Seeking, and Social Orientation. Burnout was negatively associated with Perceived Intimacy and Customer Authenticity, while Need for Recovery was positively associated with Information Seeking and negatively associated with Customer Authenticity.

**Table 11**

*Correlations between Employee Well-Being (DV) and Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions (PCI) (Potential Mediator)*

	1.Burnout	2.Need	3.Engage	4.Job	5.Life	6.Inti	7.Socl	8.Info	9.Auth
1.Burnout	--								
2.Need	.54***	--							
3.Engage	-.27***	.10*	--						
4.Job	-.31***	-.04	.66***	--					
5.Life	-.20***	-.04	.51***	.56***	--				
6.Inti	-.21***	.03	.37***	.23***	.25***	--			
7.Socl	-.07	.04	.27***	.14***	.14***	.35***	--		
8.Info	-.06	.14***	.24***	.14***	.15***	.38***	.32***	--	
9.Auth	-.25***	-.34***	-.13**	-.01	-.07	-.22***	-.15***	-.19***	--

Note. 1. Burnout 2. Need for Recovery 3. Engagement 4. Job Satisfaction 5. Life Satisfaction 6. Perceived Intimacy 7. Social Orientation 8. Information Seeking 9. Customer Authenticity

The results of descriptive and correlation analyses indicated that hospitality employees had generally high levels of communal orientation and great well-being outcomes. Although the survey respondents did not appear to be highly engaged in positive relational communications, their perceptions of customer interactions were relatively positive, with average scores for all perception dimensions except for Customer Authenticity being above the mid-point. Furthermore, there were notable differences in communal orientation and well-being experiences across demographic groups. For example, males experienced fewer strain symptoms than females, and Millennials (aged 25 +) showed higher levels of communal oriented than Gen Z (aged 24 and under).

### **4.3 Regression Analyses**

The purpose of the regression analysis was to examine the nature of the relationship between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Employee Well-Being (DV) and to investigate whether Employee PRC behaviours and Employee PCI perceptions (i.e., potential mediators) accounted for that association. The main effect of the IV on the DV and the mediating mechanisms of this effect are discussed as below.

#### **4.3.1 Main Effect**

Results of correlation analyses indicated that the simple main effect of Employee Communal Orientation (IV) on Employee Well-Being (DV) was significant. Specifically, Employee Communal Orientation (IV) was negatively associated with Burnout and positively associated with Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction. Higher levels of Employee Communal Orientation were linked to greater ratings of Employee Well-Being, with the exception of Need for Recovery, which showed no significant association with Employee Communal Orientation.

#### **4.3.2 Mediation Analysis**

Employee PCI perception and Employee PRC behaviour were hypothesized as potential mediators for the main effect of Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Employee Well-Being (DV). Correlation analyses revealed that Employee PCI perceptions were significantly associated with both Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Employee Well-Being (DV), suggesting that Employee PCI perceptions may mediate the main effect of the IV on the DV. However, there were no evidence of mediation by Employee PRC behaviour in the relationship between the IV and the DV. According to the correlation analyses, there was no significant association between Employee PRC behaviour and Employee Communal Orientation (IV),



indicating that Employee PRC behaviours cannot be assumed to account for the effect of the IV on the DV. Therefore, the following section only focused on examining the mediating effect of employee PCI perceptions.

#### **4.3.2.1 Employee Communal Orientation and Burnout**

Two sets of linear regression models were used to examine the association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) with employee Burnout (DV). The first model included control variables and Employee Communal Orientation to examine their effects on Burnout. In the second model, employee PCI perceptions were added to test their potential contribution in explaining any significant relationship between Employee Communal Orientation and Burnout.

The results of regression analyses showed that only Age and Education were significantly associated with Burnout (Table 12, Model 1). The risk of burnout appeared to decrease with age and increase with education levels, indicating that older respondents and those with higher education status were more likely to experience a higher risk of burnout. In Model 1, higher levels of Employee Communal Orientation were associated with lower levels of Burnout ( $B = -.38, p < .001$ ), suggesting that the stronger the communal orientation, the less burnout employee experienced. As shown in Table 13, after the four dimensions of employee PCI perceptions were all added in Model 2, the direct effect ( $c'$ ) of Employee Communal Orientation on Burnout was reduced ( $B = -.22, p < .01$ ) compared to the total effect ( $c$ ) and the adjusted R-square increased ( $\Delta R^2 = .08$ ) with the addition of PCI perceptions to the model. Among the four dimensions of Employee PCI perceptions, the effects of Perceived Intimacy and Customer Authenticity on Burnout (DV), controlling for Communal Orientation (IV), was significant. However, the effects of Social Orientation and Information Seeking on Burnout (DV) were not significant.

**Table 12**

*Unstandardized Coefficients for Regression Models Examining Associations of Control Variables, Employee Communal Orientation (IV), and Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions (Mediator) with Burnout (DV)*

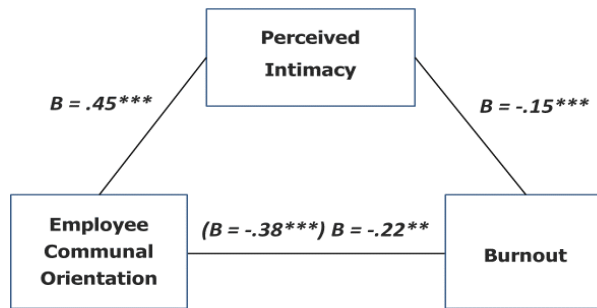
	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	SE	B	SE
<b>DV: Burnout</b>				
Constant	3.87 ***	.27	4.63 ***	.30
Male	-.10	.05	-.05	.05
Age	-.10 ***	.03	-.09 ***	.03
Education	.11 ***	.03	.12 ***	.03
Work Experience	-.02	.03	-.01	.03
Communal Orientation	-.38 ***	.08	-.22 **	.08
<i>Perceived Intimacy</i>			-.15 ***	.04
<i>Social Orientation</i>			-.01	.05
<i>Information Seeking</i>			-.01	.05
<i>Customer Authenticity</i>			-.24 ***	.03
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.11		.19	

Note. B = unstandardized coefficient. SE = standardized error. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

To gain a deeper understanding of the indirect effects, Preacher and Hayes' (2004) Process macro was utilized. Bootstrapping results confirmed that the indirect effect through Perceived Intimacy was statistically significant ( $ab = -.163$ ,  $SE = .038$ , 95% CI is from LL  $-.2389$  to UL  $-.0919$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This indicated that Perceived Intimacy partially mediated the association between Employee Communal Orientation and Burnout (Figure 4). However, results of the bootstrapping analysis indicated that the indirect effect through Customer Authenticity was not significant ( $ab = .003$ ,  $SE = .026$ , 95% CI is from LL  $-.0464$  to UL  $.0528$ ). Therefore, customer Authenticity was not found to be a mediator in the relationship between Employee Communal Orientation and Burnout.

**Figure 4**

*Association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Burnout (DV) Mediated by Employee Perceived Intimacy (Mediator)*



*Note.* Values in parentheses are the unstandardized coefficients before the addition of Employee PCI perceptions to the model. Bootstrapping analysis suggested that only Perceived Intimacy mediated the association between Communal orientation (IV) and Burnout (DV). Perceived Social Orientation, Information Seeking, and Customer Authenticity were not mediators in the association between the IV and the DV, thus not presenting in the above figure. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

#### **4.3.2.2 Employee Communal Orientation and Need for Recovery**

According to Preacher and Hayes (2004), it is important not to ignore the significance test of indirect effect, as a significant indirect effect can occur without a significant main effect (Rucker et al., 2011). Thus, the present study examined indirect effects to observe any important mediations between Employee Communal Orientation and Need for Recovery.

Regression analyses in Table 13, Model 1 indicated that only Gender and Education were significantly associated with Need for Recovery. Females and those with higher education reported a higher need for recovery after work. As the main effect between Communal Orientation (IV) and Need for Recovery (DV) was not significant, the total direct (c) in Model 1 was also not significant. In Model 2, when employee PCI perceptions were added, the direct effect (c') remained non-significant. The effects of Information Seeking and Customer

Authenticity on Need for Recovery (DV), after controlling for Communal Orientation (IV), were significant.

**Table 13**

*Unstandardized Coefficients for Regression Models Examining Associations of Control Variables, Employee Communal Orientation (IV), and Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions (Mediator) with Need for Recovery (DV)*

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	SE	B	SE
<b>DV: Need for Recovery</b>				
Constant	2.88 ***	.39	3.78 ***	.43
Male	-.23 **	.08	-.12	.07
Age	-.06	.04	-.07	.04
Education	.13 **	.04	.12 **	.04
Work Experience	-.03	.04	-.01	.04
Communal Orientation	-.07	.11	.06	.11
<i>Perceived Intimacy</i>			-.06	.05
<i>Social Orientation</i>			-.02	.07
<i>Information Seeking</i>			.18 *	.07
<i>Customer Authenticity</i>			-.37 ***	.05
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.04		.14	

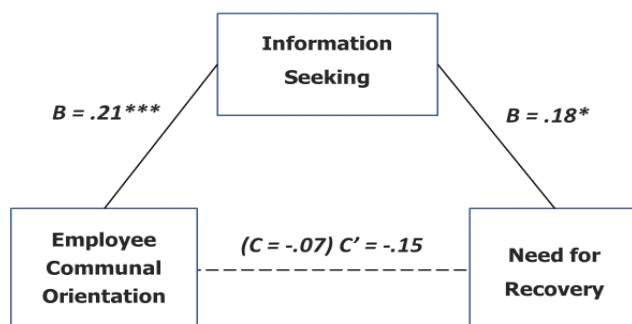
Note. B = unstandardized coefficient. SE = standardized error. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

In this case, a bootstrapping process was conducted to investigate whether the IV exerted an indirect effect on the DV through a potential mediator in the absence of a total effect or direct effect (Hayes, 2009; Rucker et al., 2011). As shown in Table 18, the bootstrapping results revealed that the indirect effect ( $a*b$ ) ( $ab = .01$ ,  $SE = .040$ , 95% CI is from LL  $-.0702$  to UL  $.0841$ ) through Customer Authenticity was not significant. For Information Seeking, bootstrapping results showed that the indirect effect ( $a*b$ ) ( $ab = .08$ ,  $SE = .032$ , 95% CI is from LL  $.0280$  to UL  $.1514$ ) was significant but in the opposite direction of the total effect ( $c = -.07$ ). According to Rucker et al (2011), when the indirect effect and total effect have the same sign

(both positive and negative), mediation occurs. When the indirect and total effect have opposite signs, suppression occurs, meaning that omitting the suppressor weakens the effect. Employee Communal Orientation was expected to reduce the Need for Recovery. However, when accounting for Information Seeking (i.e., the suppressor), it increased the Need for Recovery, thus undermining the benefit of communal orientation. The suppression effect of Information Seeking may be so strong as to render the main effect non-significant (Figure 5).

**Figure 5**

*Association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Need for Recovery (DV) Suppressed by Perceived Information Seeking (Suppressor)*



*Note.* Values in parentheses are the unstandardized coefficients before the addition of Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions. The dash line in the above figure represents a non-significant total/direct effect. Regression and bootstrapping analyses suggested that the indirect effects from Communal orientation (IV) to Need for Recovery (DV) through Employee Perceived Intimacy, Social Orientation, and Customer Authenticity were not significant, therefore they are not presented in the above figure. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

#### **4.3.2.3 Employee Communal Orientation and Work Engagement**

Two sets of linear regression models were utilized to examine the association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Work Engagement (DV). The first model included

control variables and Employee Communal Orientation. The second model added Employee PCI perceptions to test whether they explained any significant relationship between IV and DV.

**Table 14**

*Unstandardized Coefficients for Regression Models Examining Associations of Control Variables, Employee Communal Orientation (IV), and Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions (Mediator) with Work Engagement (DV)*

	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	SE	B	SE
<b>DV: Work Engagement</b>				
Constant	1.38 ***	.30	1.08 **	.31
Male	-.18 **	.06	-.15 *	.06
Age	.11 ***	.03	.09 **	.03
Education	-.06	.03	-.08 *	.03
Work Experience	.04	.04	.03	.03
Communal Orientation	.55 ***	.09	.25 **	.09
<i>Perceived Intimacy</i>			.18 ***	.04
<i>Social Orientation</i>			.17 **	.06
<i>Information Seeking</i>			.12 *	.06
<i>Customer Authenticity</i>			-.04	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.13		.22	

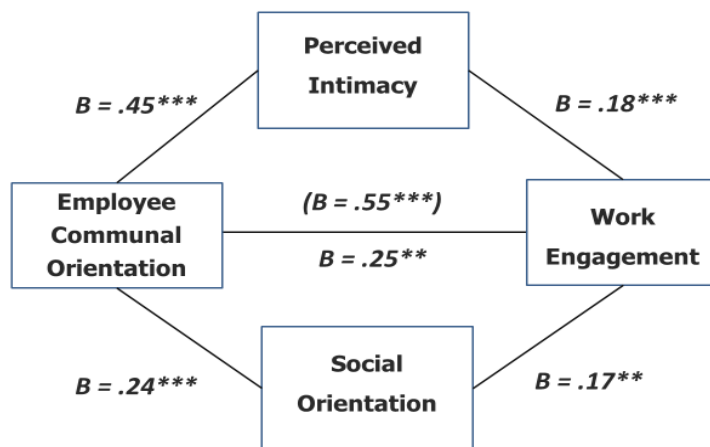
Note. B = unstandardized coefficient. SE = standardized error. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Regression analyses demonstrated that females and older adults were more engaged at work than males and younger employees (Table 14, Model 1). Work Experience did not have an impact on Work Engagement in Model 1. The total effect (c) of Employee Communal Orientation on Work Engagement was significant in Model 1 ( $B = .55, p < .001$ ). This suggested that the more communal oriented employees were, the more engaged they were. As shown in Table 15, in Model 2, after employee PCI perceptions were added, the direct effect (c') of Employee Communal Orientation on Work Engagement was reduced ( $B = .55, p < .001$  vs  $B = .25, p < .01$ ) compared to the total effect (c). The addition of PCI perceptions resulted in

an increased adjusted R-square ( $\Delta R^2 = .09$ ). The effects of Perceived Intimacy, Social Orientation, and Information Seeking on Work Engagement (DV) after controlling for Communal Orientation (IV) were all significant. However, no support was found for the expected mediating role of Customer Authenticity.

**Figure 6**

*Association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Work Engagement (DV) Mediated by Employee Perceived Intimacy and Social Orientation*



*Note.* (1) Values in parentheses are the unstandardized coefficients before the addition of Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions to the model. Regression and bootstrapping analyses suggested that the indirect effects from Communal orientation (IV) to Need for Recovery (DV) through Perceived Information Seeking and Customer Authenticity were not significant, therefore they were not mediators and not presented in the above figure. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

The potentially mediating roles of Perceived Intimacy, Social Orientation, and Information Seeking in the relationship between Communal Orientation and Work Engagement were tested. The results of bootstrapping analyses revealed that the indirect effect (a\*b) of Communal Orientation on Work Engagement through Perceived Intimacy ( $ab = .20$ ,  $SE = .046$ , 95% CI is from LL .1137 to UL .2905) and Social Orientation ( $ab = .07$ ,  $SE = .025$ , 95% CI is from LL .0249 to UL .1210) were statistically significant. However, the indirect effect of

Information Seeking ( $ab = .02$ ,  $SE = .022$ , 95% CI is from LL  $-.0001$  to UL  $.0398$ ) was not significant. Overall, Perceived Intimacy and Social Orientation accounted for 36% and 12% of the total effect of Employee Communal Orientation on Work Engagement, respectively (see Table 17).

#### **4.3.2.4 Employee communal Orientation and Job Satisfaction**

Two sets of linear regression models were utilized to investigate the relationship between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Job Satisfaction (DV). The first model included control variables and Employee Communal Orientation, while the second model added Employee PCI perceptions to test their potential contribution in explaining any significant relationship between Communal Orientation and Job Satisfaction.

Regression analyses revealed that, in Model 1, only Age and education had a significant impact on Job Satisfaction. Work Experience did not have an effect on Job Satisfaction. Specifically, older respondents and those with a lower education background reported higher job satisfaction (Table 15, Model 1). In Model 1, the total effect (c) of Employee Communal Orientation on Job Satisfaction was significant ( $B = .52$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The results indicated that employees with higher communal orientations reported higher job satisfaction. After adding employee PCI perceptions in Model 2, the direct effect (c') of Employee Communal Orientation on Job Satisfaction was reduced ( $B = .35$ ,  $p < .01$ ) compared to the total effect (c). The adjusted R-square increased ( $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ). The effect of Perceived Intimacy on Job Satisfaction (DV) after controlling for Communal Orientation (IV) was significant (Table 15, Model 2). However, the effects of the other 3 dimensions of employee PCI perceptions on Job Satisfaction after controlling for Communal Orientation were not significant.



**Table 15**

*Unstandardized Coefficients for Regression Models Examining Associations of Control Variables, Employee Communal Orientation (IV), and Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions (Mediator) with Job Satisfaction (DV)*

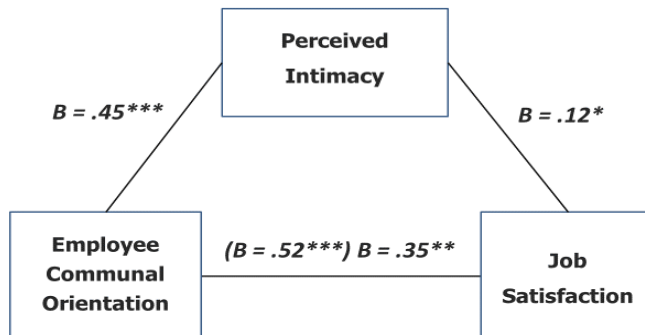
	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	SE	B	SE
<b>DV: Job Satisfaction</b>				
Constant	1.82 ***	.35	1.57 ***	.41
Male	-.11	.07	-.10	.07
Age	.11 **	.04	.10 **	.04
Education	-.08 *	.04	-.10 *	.04
Work Experience	.02	.04	.01	.04
Communal Orientation	.52 ***	.10	.35 **	.11
<i>Perceived Intimacy</i>			.12 *	.05
<i>Social Orientation</i>			.04	.07
<i>Information Seeking</i>			.07	.07
<i>Customer Authenticity</i>			.03	.05
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.09		.10	

*Note.* B = unstandardized coefficient. SE = standardized error. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

The results of bootstrapping analyses showed that the indirect effect (a\*b) for Perceived Intimacy on Job Satisfaction was significant (ab = .13, SE = .052, 95% CI is from LL .0301 to UL .2368). Among all dimensions of Employee PCI perceptions, Perceived Intimacy was the only mediator in the relationship between Employee Communal Orientation and Job Satisfaction (see Figure 8). Employee Perceived Intimacy during service encounters accounted for 25% of the total effect of Communal Orientation on Job Satisfaction (see Table 17).

**Figure 7**

*Association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Job Satisfaction (DV) Mediated by Perceived Intimacy*



*Note.* Values in parentheses are the unstandardized coefficients before the addition of Employee PCI Perceptions the model. Regression analysis and bootstrapping analyses suggested that the indirect effects from Communal orientation (IV) to Need for Recovery (DV) through Perceived Information Seeking, Social Orientation, and Customer Authenticity were not significant, therefore they were not presented in the above figure. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

#### **4.3.2.5 Employee Communal orientation and Life Satisfaction**

Two sets of linear regression models were used to examine the association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Life Satisfaction (DV). In the first model, control variables and Employee Communal Orientation were included. Employee PCI perceptions were added in the second model to test their potential contribution in explaining any significant relationship between Communal Orientation and Life Satisfaction.

Regression analyses revealed that only Age and education had significant effects on Life Satisfaction. Older employees and those with lower education levels reported higher life satisfaction. In Model 1, Communal Orientation had a moderately positive effect on Life Satisfaction ( $B = .43, p < .001$ ). Employees with a higher communal orientation tended to be

more satisfied with their life. In Model 2, as illustrated in Table 16, the direct effect (c') was reduced ( $B = .43, p < .001$  vs  $B = .26, p < .01$ ) and the adjusted R-square somewhat increased ( $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ) when Perceived Intimacy, Social Orientation, Information Seeking, and Customer Authenticity were added. Only the effect of Perceived Intimacy on Life Satisfaction (DV) after controlling for Communal Orientation (IV) was significant (Table 16, Model 2). The effects of the other 3 dimensions of Employee PCI perceptions on Life Satisfaction after controlling for Communal Orientation (IV) were not significant.

**Table 16**

*Unstandardized Coefficients for Regression Models Examining Associations of Control Variables, Employee Communal Orientation (IV), and Employee Perceptions of Customer Interactions with Life Satisfaction (DV)*

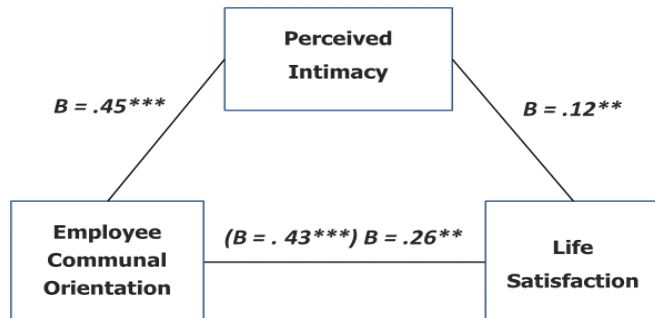
	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	SE	B	SE
<b>DV: Life Satisfaction</b>				
Constant	2.21 ***	.32	2.12 ***	.37
Male	-.12	.06	-.10	.06
Age	.09 **	.03	.08 *	.03
Education	-.11 **	.04	-.13 ***	.04
Work Experience	.05	.04	.04	.04
Communal Orientation	.43 ***	.09	.26 **	.10
<i>Perceived Intimacy</i>			.12 **	.04
<i>Social Orientation</i>			.02	.06
<i>Information Seeking</i>			.09	.06
<i>Customer Authenticity</i>			-.02	.04
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.09		.11	

Note. B = unstandardized coefficient. SE = standardized error. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Bootstrapping analyses confirmed that only the indirect effect (a\*b) of Communal Orientation on Life Satisfaction through Perceived Intimacy ( $ab = .13, SE = .045, 95\% CI$  is from LL .0404 to UL .2175) was significant. Employee Communal Orientation was positively linked with Life Satisfaction and this effect was 30% explained by employee Perceived Intimacy.

**Figure 8**

*Association between Employee Communal Orientation (IV) and Life Satisfaction (DV) Mediated by Perceived Intimacy*



*Note.* Values in parentheses are the unstandardized coefficients before the addition of PCI Perceptions to the model. Results suggested that the indirect effects from Communal orientation (IV) to Life Satisfaction (DV) through Perceived Information Seeking, Social Orientation, and Customer Authenticity were not significant, therefore they were not presented in the above figure. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Thus far, mediation and Hayes PROCESS (2013) analyses indicated that Employee Communal Orientation (IV) was significantly associated with Employee Well-Being (DV), and this association was mediated by Employee PCI Perceptions, as summarized in Table 17.

#### **4.4 Summary**

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between Employee Communal Orientation and Employee Well-Being. The results of correlation analysis showed significant main effects between Employee Communal Orientation and all aspects of Employee Well-Being, with the exception of Need for Recovery. The study also aimed to examine how and why communal orientation contributed to well-being by exploring the potential mediating effect of employee PCI perceptions on the main effects.

The findings indicated that Employee PCI perceptions, with the exception of Customer Authenticity, were significant mediators in the relationship between Communal Orientation and

Employee Well-Being outcomes. As summarized in Table 18, Perceived Intimacy was the most meaningful mediator, explaining 43% of employee Burnout, 36% of Work Engagement, 25% of Job Satisfaction, and 30% of Life Satisfaction. Social Orientation accounted for 12% of the effect of Employee Communal Orientation on Work Engagement. Information Seeking suppressed the association between Employee Communal Orientation and Need for Recovery. However, Customer Authenticity did not mediate the relationship between Employee Communal Orientation and any Well-Being outcome.

An unexpected finding was that employee Communal Orientation was not significantly associated with any employee PRC behaviours. Therefore, none of employee PRC behaviours mediated the effect of Employee Communal Orientation on Employee Well-Being. Nonetheless, some employee PRC behaviours, not related to Communal Orientation though, somewhat benefited employee well-being. Asking caring questions was significantly positively associated with Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction, while providing compliments and offering encouragement were significantly positively associated with Work Engagement.

There were notable differences in Employee Communal Orientation and Well-Being outcomes across demographic groups. Work Experience in the hospitality industry and Age were positively associated with Employee Communal Orientation. Age was also positively associated with Work Engagement, Job Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction, while negatively associated with Burnout. Education was positively associated with Burnout and Need for Recovery, while negatively associated with Job Satisfaction and Life Satisfaction. Female employees in the hospitality industry were more engaged at work, while needed more time to recovery after work than male employees.

**Table 17***Results of Mediation Analysis for the Effect of Communal Orientation on Employee Well-Being*

PCI (mediators)	Measures of Employee Well-Being (Dependent Variable)				
	Burnout	Need for Recovery	Work Engagement	Job Satisfaction	Life Satisfaction
<b>1. Perceived Intimacy</b>					
Indirect	-.1631	-.0685	.1957	.1292	.1272
LLCI	-.2389	-.1743	.1137	.0301	.0404
ULCI	-.0919	.0377	.2905	.2368	.2175
Direct	-.2160**	-.0577	.2463**	.3489**	.2625**
	<b>M</b>	/	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>2. Social Orientation</b>					
Indirect	-.0024	-.0064	.0671	.0176	.0092
LLCI	-.0479	-.0667	.0249	-.0350	-.0432
ULCI	.0414	.0511	.1210	.0753	.0617
Direct	-.2160**	-.0577	.2463**	.3489**	.2625**
	/	/	<b>M</b>	/	/
<b>3. Information Seeking</b>					
Indirect	-.0027	.0809	.0187	.0212	.0305
LLCI	-.0442	.0280	-.0001	-.0326	-.0143
ULCI	.0360	.1514	.0398	.0703	.0780
Direct	-.2160**	-.1486	.2463**	.3489**	.2625**
	/	<b>S</b>	/	/	/
<b>4. Customer Authenticity</b>					
Indirect	.0026	.0055	.0005	-.0004	.0003
LLCI	-.0464	-.0702	-.0111	-.0126	-.0091
ULCI	.0528	.0841	.0125	.0118	.0123
Direct	-.2160**	-.0577	.2463**	.3489**	.2625**
	/	/	/	/	/

*Note.* (1) PCI = employee perceptions of customer interactions, M = mediation, S = suppression, / = no mediation effect (2) Perceived Intimacy mediated the association between Communal orientation and all dimensions of Employee Well-Being. Social Orientation mediated the association between Communal Orientation and Work Engagement. Information Seeking suppressed the effect of Communal Orientation on the Need for Recovery. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## **Chapter 5**

### **Discussion**

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between communal orientation and well-being among frontline employees in the hospitality industry. It examined how communal orientation related to employee experiences of well-being at work, including burnout, need for recovery, work engagement, and job satisfaction, as well as in general life, such as life satisfaction. Additionally, the study aimed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the simultaneous development of well-being outcomes by exploring the potential mediating effects of positive relational communication (PRC) behaviours among employees and their perceptions of customer interactions (PCI). This is particularly important for practical purposes as it can aid in comprehending the underlying mechanisms and processes related to employee well-being, which can inform the design of interventions aimed at enhancing employee well-being experiences in hospitality workplaces.

#### **5.1 Communal orientation and Employee Well-Being**

The survey was conducted among full-time hospitality industry employees in Hainan Island, China. As expected, the results supported Hypothesis 1, showing a significant positive association between employee communal orientation and their well-being. This finding aligned with established literature on the positive impact of communal orientation on personal well-being (Buunk & Schaufeli, 2018; Hepburn & Enns, 2013; Le et al., 2018). Higher communal orientation was linked with lower burnout, higher work engagement, higher job satisfaction, and greater life satisfaction. Conversely, lower communal orientation was linked with higher burnout, disengagement, and lower satisfaction with job and life. However, recovery time after work was not significantly associated with communal orientation.

The study did not support Hypothesis 2, suggesting that employee PRC behaviours did not mediate or explain the association between communal orientation and employee well-being. However, the findings provided support for Hypothesis 3, indicating that employee PCI perceptions mediated this association, and perceived intimacy was the most significant mediator. The following discussion then focuses on the main effect from communal orientation to each dimension of employee well-being; with employee PCI perceptions as mediating mechanisms.

### **5.1.1 Communal Orientation and Burnout as a Main Finding**

The study's initial finding is that a stronger communal orientation is associated with lower burnout rates, and this link can be explained by employee perceived intimacy.

#### **5.1.1.1 Communal Orientation was Negatively Associated with Burnout**

The survey results revealed that higher levels of employee communal orientation were associated with reduced burnout symptoms across all demographic groups, consistent with robust evidence on the buffering role of communal orientation in burnout process (Buunk & Schaufeli, 2018; Hepburn & Enns, 2013; Medvene et al., 1997; VanYperen, 1996). The buffering effect of hospitality employees' communal orientations also rippled through all three dimensions of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and inefficacy.

Employees with high communal orientation were less likely to experience emotional exhaustion, which is a core symptom of burnout indicating the imbalance between environmental demands and personal resources (Mohr et al., 2006). Highly communal-oriented employees may derive positive emotions and greater social support from caring for customers (Le et al., 2013), enhancing their personal resources (Deci & Ryan, 2000) and reducing the demand-resource discrepancy in their service jobs.



In contrast, employees with low communal orientation were more likely to engage in depersonalization coping strategies, such as devaluing their work, feeling uncaring, and withdrawing emotionally from customers (VanYperen,1996), especially when they feel under-benefitted (Buunk & Schaufeli, 2018). Inefficacy, another dimension of burnout, can also reflect an unbalanced relationship and a lack of control (Buunk & Schaufeli, 2018). Employees with high communal orientation tended to have higher levels of personal accomplishment and reduced inefficacy. The strongest linear effect between communal orientation and the three dimensions of burnout was found with reduced inefficacy, consistent with Truchot and Deregard's (2001) findings in healthcare contexts. However, despite the finding that caring communications in service encounters were associated with reduced burnout symptoms, the present study revealed that successful help did not necessarily impact employee efficacy.

Overall, the study provided insights into the issue of burnout among frontline employees in the hospitality industry. Although higher levels of communal orientation were associated with lower levels of burnout, the strength of this relationship varied among different age and gender groups. Communal orientation was more beneficial for male, Millennial, and restaurant employees compared to female, Gen Z, and employees in other hospitality sectors. These findings highlighted the importance of addressing individual differences in preventing burnout in the hospitality industry.

#### **5.1.1.2 Communal Orientation and Burnout: Mediated by Perceived Intimacy**

The study's results indicated that individuals with high communal orientation exhibited lower levels of burnout, and this relationship was significantly mediated by employee perceived intimacy. The risk of burnout decreased for employees who scored high on communal orientation, with perceived intimacy explaining 43% of this decrease.

Interestingly, the study found that hospitality employees rated their perceptions of intimacy with customers as high, with above-average levels of mutual immediacy (e.g., feeling affective toward each other), similarity (e.g., understanding the feelings of each other), and receptivity (e.g., being encouraging and supportive when the other is unhappy). This is a novel finding as previous research has mainly focused on customer perspectives (Nasr et al., 2018) or objective indicatives of intimacy (e.g., personalizing conversations) (Manzo, 2015), rather than employee perceptions. By examining employee subjective perceptions, the present study extended previous research and highlighted the importance of relationship intimacy in employee experiences within service encounters.

The study also found that hospitality employees high in communal orientation tended to report higher levels of relationship intimacy. This finding was in line with previous research by Medvene et al (1997) showing that caring behaviours promote intimacy. Communal orientation makes people more likely to be sensitive to others' needs, express their emotions, and offer care and support (Le et al., 2013), leading to a mutual sense of immediacy, similarity, and receptivity, ultimately resulting in some degree of relationship intimacy. This finding extended previous research on the benefits of having a communal orientation in social relationships, highlighting intimacy as a significant outcome for communal-oriented frontline employees to experience well-being in the business context.

Hospitality employees who perceived higher intimacy in their interactions with customers experienced less burnout, suggesting that feeling connected, accepted, and involved are rewarding (Sidarus et al., 2019) and have a positive effect on individual well-being (Mirivel, 2019; Popovic et al., 2003). Close interpersonal relationships with customers are also vital resources for living a fulfilling, vigorous, and purposeful work life (Schön Persson et al.,

2018), providing emotional lifting and meaningfulness to daily work. The study suggested that the more employees perceive intimacy in their work interactions, the lower their risk of work-related burnout.

From an applied point of view, this finding highlighted the importance of considering individual differences among employees. Some employees may have a fear of intimacy and prefer to keep an emotional distance from customers, which could compromise positive well-being experiences. On the other hand, highly communal-oriented employees may be less likely to experience burnout symptoms due to their predisposition for fostering relationship intimacy.

### **5.1.2 Communal Orientation and Need for Recovery as a Main Finding**

No significant association was found between employee communal orientation and the need for recovery. Findings indicated that perceived information seeking played a suppression effect in this relationship, making the main effect unobservable.

#### **5.1.2.1 Non-Significant Association between Communal Orientation and Recovery Need**

There was no significant link found between employee communal orientation and the need for recovery after work, except for a weak negative link was found among retail and car rental workers ( $N = 14$ ). However, due to the small group size, the reliability of this link might be compromised and unreliable (Faber & Fonseca, 2014).

Theoretically, employees with high communal orientation should experience lower levels of the need for recovery. This is because the personal rewards they developed from caring for their clients may help restore the balance in their relationships with clients and replenish the resources used up (Van Yperen, 1996). As a result, they are less likely to experience emotional irritation caused by asymmetric relationship (Buunk et al., 1993; Krisor & Rowold, 2013). However, the present study's findings did not support this assumption.

It is worth noting that various factors can influence the time required to recover from work-related fatigue and stress, including job precariousness, which significantly impacts employee recovery experiences in the hospitality industry (Sluiter, 1999). The potential benefits of having a communal orientation may be negated in the provision of accommodation and food and drink outside the home, where low job security, long working hours, heavy workloads, weekend work, harsh supervision styles, limited training opportunities, and lack of employee empowerment are commonplace. Additionally, employees in this industry are often exposed to emotionally disturbing situations during everyday service routines, such as dealing with customer incivility (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019). Frontline employees in the hospitality sector on Hainan Island face further challenges due to the tropical climate, with high temperatures and humidity, and the low job stability caused by COVID lockdowns.

The increasing job precariousness and work-related fatigue in the hospitality industry has become a significant concern for employees (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019; Reynold et al., 2021), including those in the present study, which may heighten their need for recovery after work. This increase may to some extent negate the potential positive effects of communal orientation on their recovery experiences.

#### **5.1.2.2 Communal Orientation and Need for Recovery: Suppressed by Information Seeking**

The present study found that the non-significant association between communal orientation and the need for recovery was influenced by the presence of a suppressor. Rucker et al., (2011) suggested that when the IV→DV relationship is not significant, a suppression indirect effect might be present. In this case, the suppressor is an intervening variable through which the indirect effect has the opposite sign of the total effect, making the main effect

unobservable if it is left out. The study identified information seeking as the suppressor, which strongly suppressed the expected positive effect of communal orientation on employee recovery experience.

Highly communal-oriented employees were more likely to report high levels of information seeking during customer interactions, which was positively associated with all five types of employee PRC behaviours. This was consistent with the theory of predicted outcome value (Sunnafank, 1990) and previous studies (Ramirez Jr. & Zhang, 2007), which suggested that information seeking often involves asking personal questions as well as reciprocal encouragement and disclosure. However, higher levels of information seeking were also positively associated with the need for recovery, suggesting that employees who engage in more information seeking may require more time to recuperate after work. This finding challenged previous research that has shown the positive effects of information seeking on well-being, such as connectedness and social capital enforcement (Frampton & Fox, 2021; Rains & Tukachinsky, 2015).

The identification of information seeking as a suppressor is crucial from a practical standpoint. Frontline employees who actively seek personal information from customers, e.g., by asking, encouraging, and disclosing and self-disclosing, may deplete their personal resources, leading to exhaustion and reduced energy reserves. The demand for information seeking may impede natural recovery after work, making it more difficult for employees who initiated more caring behaviours to return to their normal state once they are home. To mitigate the suppressing effect of perceived information seeking, management interventions could be designed to help employees gain customer personal information in a passive way. For example, cloud-based property management systems such as OPERA, commonly used in hotel front desk

and food outlets, could enable frontline employees to get access to guest history, personal preferences, and other required information without actively seeking it.

### **5.1.3 Communal Orientation and Work Engagement as a Main Finding**

Communal orientation was positively associated with work engagement and this association was mediated by employee perceived intimacy and social orientation of customer interactions.

#### **5.1.3.1 Communal Orientation was Positively Associated with Work Engagement**

The results of the study suggested positive associations between communal orientation and several dimensions of employee well-being, with the strongest linear effect observed between communal orientation and work engagement. Specifically, the results revealed that communal orientation accounted for approximately 30% of the variance in work engagement, with highly communal-oriented employees demonstrating higher levels of vigor, dedication, and absorption when serving clients.

Interestingly, indicated that the relationship between communal orientation and work engagement was more pronounced among employees with high rates in self-efficacy. It was found that high communal orientation was associated with lower inefficacy, which was consistent with previous research documenting the positive effect of communal orientation on self-efficacy (Crocker & Canevello, 2008; Piferi & Lawler, 2006). This finding suggested that selecting employees with high communal orientation could improve their engagement by boosting their self-efficacy, as self-efficacious employees are more engaged in their work roles (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

Incorporating communal orientation as a dispositional trait in employee selection systems could be a valuable strategy for improving work engagement in the hospitality

industry. However, it is important to acknowledge that further longitudinal research is needed to establish the exact causal relationship between communal orientation and work engagement (and for other well-being dimensions as well). Nevertheless, these findings offer a fresh perspective on how to enhance employee engagement in the hospitality industry.

### **5.1.3.2 Communal Orientation and Work Engagement: Mediated by Perceived Intimacy and Social Orientation**

The survey results indicated that the hospitality employees had a high level of work engagement, which was positively linked to their communal orientations. The regression analyses showed that this positive association was mediated by the employees' perceived intimacy and social orientation during customer interactions. Specifically, employees with higher communal orientation tended to have higher work engagement levels, with 36% of this increase explained by their perceived intimacy and 12% explained by their perceived social orientation during customer interactions. However, the mediating effects of perceived information-seeking and customer authenticity on this association were not significant. These results highlighted the importance of perceived intimacy and social orientation in the link between communal orientation and work engagement among hospitality employees.

#### **5.1.3.2.1 Perceived Intimacy**

The study found that both employee communal orientation and perceived intimacy had a positive effect on work engagement, supporting Bakker and Demerouti's (2008) finding that personal resources and job resources either independently or jointly predict work engagement. Results showed that communal-oriented employees were more engaged at work, which was consistent with previous research suggesting that personal resources positively influenced work engagement especially when job demands were high (Bakker, 2011; Bakker & Demerouti,

2008; Bakker et al., 2007). The results also showed that perceived intimacy was a critical job resource that had a positive relationship with work engagement. In fact, perceived intimacy was found to be the most significant factor among all the variables related to work engagement, accounting for 36% of the variance, compared to communal orientation, which explained 29% of the variance.

The study further revealed that perceived intimacy played a significant mediating role in the process of employee engagement. Highly communal-oriented employees tended to develop relationship intimacy during customer interactions, resulting in high levels of work engagement. Employees with high levels of perceived intimacy, likely with a high communal orientation, tended to be more engaged at work. They were more likely to feel energized during customer interactions, lose track of time while serving clients, and perceive their work as meaningful and purposeful. On the other hand, less engaged employees, likely with a low communal orientation, reported unsatisfactory results for the main dimensions of relationship intimacy. These findings supported the philosophy of workplace relationships (McCarthy, 2000; Mirivel, 2019) and the relational outcome value theory (Sonnafrank, 1986), suggesting that a desire for relationship intimacy is typical of engaged hospitality employees and fuels engagement for those in a communal condition.

The discovery of the mediating role of relationship intimacy suggested the potential for developing guidelines and policies that promote communal norms and relationship intimacy in service settings. Screening frontline employees for personal resources, such as their relationship orientation, may be useful in enhancing their ability to develop positive interpersonal relationships with customers. Additionally, strategies for fostering positive relationships (e.g., connection and closeness) between frontline employees and customers should be considered.



#### 5.1.3.2.2 Social Orientation

Social orientation refers to the degree to which employee-customer interactions are guided by personal scripts instead of programmed service scripts (Vilnai-Yavetz & Rafaeli, 2003). More than half of the respondents rated their interactions with customers as socially oriented, indicating that their clients were more interested in engaging in relational talk, such as chit-chat, than focusing solely on the task at hand. Although employees did not frequently initiate social conversations, customers were often successful in engaging in relational talk with their service providers. This preference for sociality in hospitality scenarios on the island aligned with Manzo's (2015) observation that face-to-face, organic, traditional sociality is a recurring phenomenon between customers and their service providers in most sociable spaces for consumption.

This preference for sociality can be attributed to the fact that hospitality settings in China, including hotels, resorts, restaurants, parks, or malls, tend to be open, permeable, and democratic spaces where people come not only to stay, have meals, or make purchases, but also to mingle, socialize, exercise, and have fun. Chinese customers, especially visitors from the mainland, tend to intentionally emphasize the "lack" of social distance or the emotional proximity between themselves and their service providers. For example, Hanser (2008) noted that customers in Chinese malls may ask employees about their economic situation in a direct and potentially insulting manner. Instead of being offended, employees may "point out their own wages to customers as a way of establishing a sense of empathy or rapport" with the customer (p. 79). When natural and spontaneous conversational episodes, such as employee self-disclosures about their humble wages, are part of the service encounter, they may feel accepted, involved, and cared for.

The findings supported the notion that hospitality employees have a desire for sociality in their services (Manzo, 2015), and the fulfillment of this desire is related to high levels of individual communal orientation. Despite time pressure and crowding, employees with high communal orientation tended to perceive their interactions with customers as more socially oriented. Furthermore, when communal-oriented employees' needs for social orientation are met by being cared for by their clients, it may result in a more motivated work experience.

The findings also revealed that high levels of perceived social orientation were associated with high levels of work engagement, suggesting that face-to-face sociability might be another characteristic of engaged employees in the hospitality industry. These findings are noteworthy because social elements of service interactions have not been extensively studied in the work engagement literature (Lee et al., 2020).

Finally, the study's findings indicated that employees with a high communal orientation tended to develop sociability during service encounters, which in turn contributed to a high level of work engagement. These dynamics emphasized the importance of sociality in work engagement, particularly for communal-oriented employees. This finding was consistent with Schön Persson et al.'s (2018) study, highlighting a social personality as a resource for employees to develop a sense of meaningfulness and motivation in their work. It is recommended that sociality be encouraged in fast-paced, time-limited, or even AI-smart service delivery, despite the increasing loss of traditional face-to-face human contact. Therefore, hospitality management could consider developing strategies to encourage personalization and integrating social elements into the service landscape.

#### **5.1.4 Communal Orientation and Job Satisfaction as a Main Finding**

Communal orientation was positively associated with job satisfaction and this association was mediated by employee perceived intimacy during customer interactions.

##### **5.1.4.1 Communal Orientation was Positively Associated with Job Satisfaction**

The findings of this study offer significant contributions to the extant literature on job satisfaction. First and most importantly, the results demonstrated that employee communal orientation accounted for a significant portion (25%) of the variance in job satisfaction, indicating that this personality trait played a crucial role in shaping their perceptions toward their work role and enhancing their job satisfaction. Moreover, these findings provided support for communal relationship theory (Clark & Mills, 2011), which suggested that individuals with communal-oriented personalities derive satisfaction from *giving* care to others in their relationships (Le et al., 2013).

As discussed previously, in almost all service categories, giving care to clients is governed by two behaviour norms: voluntariness and opportunism (Goodwin, 1996). Customers are more likely to respond negatively to prosocial behaviours by employees if they perceive these behaviours as opportunistic. However, when employees' help and caring behaviours are perceived as voluntary (i.e., moderated by employee attributions of voluntariness), they foster communal relationships with customers (Goodwin, 1996), which can lead to increased levels of positive responses, social connection, and social support (Goodwin, 1996; Gremler et al., 2001). Thus, employees' autonomous caring, attributed to their communal orientation, rather than opportunistic caring based on outcome evaluation, is more likely to result in their enjoyment (Tolich, 1993) and satisfaction (Ritchie, 2016) in their everyday service interactions.

Overall, the study revealed that hospitality employees exhibited a high level of job satisfaction, and those with a high communal orientation were even more satisfied with their job. This finding contributes to the literature on job satisfaction by highlighting the benefits of possessing a communal orientation in the workplace. In fact, employing frontline service workers in a communal condition, characterized by low opportunism and high voluntariness, can be advantageous for both employees and employers.

#### **5.1.4.2 Communal Orientation and Job Satisfaction: Mediated by Perceived Intimacy**

Based on the survey results, 75% of the respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction with their job. Furthermore, the analyses revealed a positive association between employee communal orientations and job satisfaction, with perceived intimacy mediating this relationship. High communal orientation led to increased job satisfaction, with 25% of this increase attributed to individual perceived intimacy.

Communal orientation can be linked to job satisfaction through the development of personal rewards, such as connection, support, and even friendship, between employees and customers (Goodwin, 1996; Gremler et al., 2001; Le et al., 2013). These personal rewards constitute relationship intimacy (Walther & Burgoon, 1992), which has a lasting positive effect on personal and relational happiness at work (Mirivel, 2019). This study provided further evidence for the role of relationship intimacy as a mechanism by which communal orientation can improve job satisfaction.

The findings also aligned with the thematic content of positive psychology (Socha & Beck, 2015), which suggested that satisfying human needs for connectedness and closeness facilitate individual well-being. The positive link revealed between perceived intimacy and job satisfaction was also consistent with robust findings on this relationship in healthcare settings

(Ko & Kim, 2014; Moore et al., 1997; Moore & Katz, 1996; Schön Persson et al., 2018).

Essentially, perceived intimacy is a key factor that explains the benefits of having a communal orientation and is useful in predicting overall job satisfaction – job satisfaction increases as relationship intimacy increases.

These findings underscored the significance of relationship intimacy and can inform the development of employee interventions aimed at enhancing support, encouragement, affection, and understanding between employees and customers. While fostering general close relationships between employees and customers is usually encouraged by service organizations, building extremely close relationships may not always be beneficial. As a result, hospitality managers need to employ strategies that improve intimacy to boost job satisfaction, while also exercising control over personal loyalty to maintain business well-being.

### **5.1.5 Communal Orientation and Life Satisfaction as a Main Finding**

Communal orientation was positively associated with life satisfaction and this association was mediated by employee perceived intimacy during customer interactions.

#### **5.1.5.1 Communal Orientation was Positively Associated with Life Satisfaction**

The results of the study confirmed that the hypothesis that a stronger communal orientation is associated with greater life satisfaction is valid. Communal orientation accounted for 22% of the variance in life satisfaction, indicating that employees with a high communal orientation are more likely to experience happiness in their lives. This finding was consistent with communal relationship theory (Clark & Mills, 2011) and previous research demonstrating the positive impact of communal orientation on life satisfaction for helpers (Le et al., 2018).

However, this finding contradicted Areguy et al.'s (2019) research, which found a negative association between communal orientation and life satisfaction among undergraduate

student carers. The researchers suggested that this discrepancy could be due to the stress related to the life transition that student carers experience as they shift away from their childhood into a caregiving role, which may be amplified by their communal orientation (Areguy et al., 2019). It is also possible that, the high investment in education and the challenges of caregiver jobs may contribute to this negative association among young carers, as perceived discrepancies can suppress or even reverse the positive effects of communal orientation on life satisfaction. The survey findings supported this notion by suggesting that highly educated hospitality employees, particularly those with a master's degree or higher, reported the lowest life satisfaction, and no significant association was found between communal orientation and life satisfaction in this demographic group.

#### **5.1.5.2 Communal Orientation and Life Satisfaction: Mediated by Perceived Intimacy**

The survey results showed that respondents reported a relatively high level of global life satisfaction, and 80% of hospitality employees in the survey were satisfied or very satisfied with their life. The results also revealed that higher communal orientations were associated with greater life satisfaction, and this relationship was mediated by perceived intimacy. Specifically, individuals with a high communal orientation were more likely to have higher levels of life satisfaction, and 30% of this increase was attributed to their perceptions of intimacy in their relationships with customers.

The results of analyses showed a significant positive association between life satisfaction and job satisfaction among hospitality employees, indicating that positive experiences at work may positively affect their everyday life or vice versa. This finding was in line with Lavee and Strier's (2019) theoretical perspective on the spill-over effect.

The positive relationship between perceived intimacy and life satisfaction among hospitality employees was supported by both theoretical and empirical evidence. Scholars following the lead of the positive psychology (Socha & Beck, 2015) have explored the nature of intimacy within positive communication experiences and found that happiness is linked to feelings of connectedness, openness, care, loved, support, and understanding (Mirivel, 2019; Socha, 2019). This underscored the importance of social intimacy to the quality of life. Empirical studies on social capital (Ellison et al., 2011; Frampton & Fox, 2021; Putnam, 2000) have also confirmed the relationship between perceived intimacy and life satisfaction. Social intimacy builds social capital (Putnam, 2000), and social capital derived from acquaintances or business relationships can promote employee life satisfaction more than that derived from close relationships like family (Helliwell & Huang, 2010). Further exploration of potential mechanisms by which perceived intimacy at work relates to life satisfaction may be crucial for understanding employee well-being.

## **5.2 Theoretical Contributions**

The present study aimed to address employee well-being concerns in the hospitality industry by investigating the relationship between employee communal orientation and their well-being experiences. The study made significant theoretical contributions to communal relationship literature and provided empirical evidence on the process of employee well-being, through an online survey that involved a large sample of frontline employees working in a variety of hospitality service settings.

The results of the survey supported the communal relationship (CRT) theory (Clark & Mills, 1993; 2011) by demonstrating a link between individual communal orientation and greater personal well-being. The study extended the benefits of communal orientation to a

broader range of relationship contexts, and the positive well-being outcomes were robust, as indicated by the reduction of burnout, and the improvement of work engagement, job satisfaction, and life satisfaction among frontline employees from diverse backgrounds.

The study also yielded empirical evidence that employee-perceived intimacy mediated the relationship between communal orientation and personal well-being, thereby addressing the research question of *how* communal orientation benefits hospitality employees and in what ways. Employee perceived intimacy significantly explained the positive effects of communal orientation on burnout, work engagement, and job and life satisfaction. Furthermore, the finding identified perceived information seeking in customer interactions as a suppressing mechanism that conceals the potential of communal orientation to improve employee well-being experiences.

While the study did not find support for the proposed mediating role of employee positive relational communication (PRC) behaviour, it did suggest that initiating PRC behaviours, such as asking caring questions and providing encouragement and compliments to clients, can be rewarding for hospitality employees and enhance their well-being experiences at work and in their general lives. Although such behaviours may not necessarily be influenced by communal orientation, they aligned with Socha's (2019) framework of positive interpersonal communication and demonstrated "how positive communication in all its forms can make us authentically happier" (Muñiz-Velázquez & Pulido, 2019, p. 12). By addressing a significant gap in our understanding of positive communications in hospitality contexts, the study may provide insights into employee well-being processes.



### **5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

While this study has contributed to the relationship literature and provided valuable insights into the relationship between communal orientation and well-being, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. One significant limitation is the cross-sectional research design, which did not establish a clear temporal order for the variables and thus created ambiguity about the direction of casual influence, as described by Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968). The directions of the relationships examined in the study were all assumed on theoretical grounds, limiting the study's ability to establish a causal relationship between communal orientation and employee well-being.

A second limitation of this study is the absence of a significant association between employees' communal orientation and their PRC behaviours, which contradicts the existing literature that establishes a positive relationship between communal orientation and prosocial behaviour (Guo et al., 2022; Weinstein & Ryan, 2010). While some support exists for the presence of mixed motivation (Johnson & Grimm, 2010) and moral preference in service scenarios (Capraro & Rand, 2018), no prior investigations have explored the predictive factors of employees' positive communications within the service context.

Another limitation pertains to the method of data recollection. The study relied on participants' recollection of their PRC behaviours, particularly in terms of frequency, which may have been imprecise due to the possibility of blurred memory. Since participants' perspectives constituted the sole data source, this posed a challenge in terms of accuracy. To mitigate this issue, it is advisable to employ multiple methods and embrace a pluralist and pragmatic perspective.

To address the aforementioned limitations and enhance the quality and value of communal orientation and well-being research, several specific suggestions are proposed. Firstly, incorporating a longitudinal element by collecting personal codes in the survey could enable a follow-up or second-wave data collection. This would provide a clearer understanding of causal relationships among the variables under study. Secondly, experimental methods could be adopted to examine underlying mechanisms, including the influence of national and workplace culture. Additionally, pragmatic approaches such as journaling, the critical incident technique, case studies, and embedded methods design could enhance the accuracy and reliability of the collected data, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between communal orientation and employee well-being.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Practice**

The study's findings carry potential implications for management interventions aimed at addressing occupational stress and improving employee well-being in the hospitality industry. Firstly, targeted recruitment strategies could be implemented based on the evidence highlighting the significance of communal orientation as a personal resource associated with enhanced hospitality service experience, work engagement, and job satisfaction. Hospitality management can prioritize the recruitment of candidates with favorable relationship orientations, and demographic factors can be considered to mitigate the negative impact of customer interactions on frontline well-being. Furthermore, the study results suggest that human resource managers should ensure that recruiting messages appeal to potential applicants, particularly, for example, those who are older and possess lower educational qualifications, as these groups were found to be more likely to experience higher levels of well-being.

The second recommendation is to prioritize service design that fosters relationship intimacy. Encouraging interpersonal bonds between employees and customers can yield benefits for business performance, such as increased customer word of mouth (WOM) behaviour (Gremler et al., 2000), while simultaneously enhancing frontline employee well-being. Managers should focus on optimizing factors such as physical proximity, timing, sequence, and scripts to facilitate positive interactions between employees and customers. By nurturing a pro-social workplace culture that values and prioritizes emotional closeness, both employee well-being and business outcomes can be improved.

Finally, in addressing the issue of information seeking, which has been identified as a suppressor of the positive effect of having a communal orientation and as a demand that increases the time needed for recovery after work, appropriate interventions can be implemented. One potential solution is the introduction and regular updating of a cloud-based property management system, which can serve as a knowledge base for guest history, personal preferences, and other relevant information. Such a design would assist in developing employee familiarity with customers without excessively draining their energy.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This study provides valuable insights into the relationship between communal orientation and employee well-being outcomes among frontline employees in the hospitality industry. It reveals that employees with higher levels of communal orientation experience lower burnout, greater work engagement, higher job satisfaction, and greater life satisfaction. These associations are primarily influenced by employees' perceived intimacy during customer interactions, serving as a significant and meaningful mediator. Additionally, the study

highlights the importance of considering demographic differences in understanding well-being experiences within the hospitality industry.

In summary, these findings contribute novel theoretical insights into the manifestation of communal orientation in the business context and its link to employee well-being. The implications for hospitality managers are significant, ranging from frontline recruitment strategies to implementing interventions that enhance intimacy. Moreover, investing in employee well-being is crucial based on the powerful impact of communal orientation uncovered in this study. By recognizing the importance of communal orientation, hospitality organizations can pave the way for fostering well-being, both at the individual and business levels, in customer-contact service roles.

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## Appendix A

### Correlation Matrix

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
<b>1.Male</b>	1																			
<b>2.Age</b>	.03	1																		
<b>3.EDU</b>	-.02	-.08*	1																	
<b>4.EMPL</b>	-.05	.54***	-.06	1																
<b>5.ECO</b>	.06	.13**	.03	.22***	1															
<b>6.BURN</b>	-.10*	-.22***	.14***	-.17***	-.24***	1														
<b>7.NEED</b>	-.13**	-.11**	.13**	-.08	-.06	.54***	1													
<b>8.EGMT</b>	-.08*	.23***	-.08	.21***	.29***	-.27***	.10*	1												
<b>9.JOB</b>	-.03	.19***	-.09*	.16***	.24***	-.31***	-.04	.66***	1											
<b>10.LIFE</b>	-.05	.18***	-.13**	.18***	.22***	-.20***	-.04	.51***	.56***	1										
<b>11.ASK</b>	-.08	.07	.09	.08	.05	-.05	-.05	.11*	.14**	.12**	1									
<b>12.CMP</b>	-.11*	.06	.10*	.08	.05	-.02	.02	.13**	.13**	.09*	.71***	1								
<b>13.DIS</b>	-.13**	-.01	.13**	-.01	-.08	.09*	.04	.01	.07	.06	.49***	.51***	1							
<b>14.ENC</b>	-.07	.08	.07	.05	-.01	.02	-.01	.09*	.08	.12**	.63***	.67***	.62***	1						
<b>15.LIS</b>	-.01	.01	.08	.02	.06	-.04	-.04	.05	.08	.08	.65***	.62***	.51***	.68***	1					
<b>16.INTM</b>	-.03	.14***	.07	.20***	.45***	-.21***	.03	.37***	.23***	.25***	.14**	.17***	.01	.12**	.17***	1				
<b>17.SOCL</b>	-.03	.11*	-.01	.10*	.24***	-.07	.04	.27***	.14***	.14***	.06	.10*	.03	.06	.09	.35***	1			
<b>18.INFO</b>	-.01	.07	.12**	.04	.21***	-.06	.14***	.24***	.14***	.15***	.11*	.14**	.12**	.15***	.12**	.38***	.32***	1		
<b>19.AUTH</b>	.17***	.03	.01	.03	.02	-.25***	-.34***	-.13**	-.01	-.07	-.01	-.10*	-.11*	-.05	-.09*	-.22***	-.15***	-.19***	1	

*Note.* EDU = education background, EMPL = length of employment in hospitality, ECO = employee communal orientation, BURN = burnout, NEED = need for recovery, EGMT = work engagement, JOB = job satisfaction, LIFE = life satisfaction, ASK = asking, CMP = complimenting, DIS = disclosing, ENC = encouraging, LIS = listening, INTM = perceived intimacy, SOCL = social orientation, INFO = information seeking, AUTH = customer authenticity. n = 610, \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001

## Appendix B

### Online Survey Questionnaire

INSTRUCTIONS				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please be honest when you answer the questions. Respond to each statement according to your honest feelings about how things are actually going, rather than how you might wish them to be.</li><li>• Mark only one option per question.</li></ul>				
EXAMPLE QUESTION				
The following questions ask you about your experience during customer contact. Please rate how much you agree or disagree with these statements by marking the option that is the closest to what you think/feel is true for you.				
While interacting with clients,	Not at all Important		Extremely Important	
1. How important is it to you to listen to their very personal disclosures?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

This means you **agree** with the statement. You would tick this circle if you thought that listening to customer self-disclosure is very important to you.

## ABOUT YOU

What gender do you most identify with?

- A. Man/Transman
- B. Woman/Transwoman
- C. Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming/Gender non-binary/Gender Fluid
- D. Two-spirited
- E. I prefer to self-define: \_\_\_\_\_
- F. I prefer not to answer.

What is your age?

- A. Under 18 years old
- B. 18-24 years old
- C. 25-34 years old
- D. 35-44 years old
- E. 45 years or older

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- A. High school diploma and below
- B. College Degree
- C. Bachelor's Degree
- D. Master's and Post-Graduate Degree

How many years of employment have you completed in the hospitality industry?

- A. Less than 1 year
- B. 1 to 2 years
- C. 2 to 10 years
- D. More than 10 years

Where do you work?

- A. Front Office and other customer service sectors in Hotel
- B. Food and beverage services in fine dining restaurant, club, and public bar
- C. Entertainment and service sectors on cruise ship
- D. Recreation and sports services, including spa, sailing, parasailing, etc.
- E. Retailing services and car rental
- F. Direct customer services in theme park
- G. If your job is not listed, please specify  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**COMMUNICATIONS DURING CUSTOMER CONTACT**

The following questions ask you about specific conversation topics between you and your clients on the previous day of work. Please recall how many times you initiated the following communications (e.g., offering compliments to your clients) on your previous workday.

The type of communication behaviour	How many times
1. Asking personal or caring questions	
2. Offering compliments	
3. Disclosing or self-disclosing personal information	
4. Encouraging words and messages	
5. Active listening as a discretionary choice	

**YOUR EXPERIENCE DURING CUSTOMER CONTACT**

Reflect on the service encounters characterized by the above forms of communications and let us know your experiences within these encounters.

	Not at all <span style="margin-left: 100px;">extremely</span>				
6. How much do you feel like being encouraging and supportive to the clients when they are unhappy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. How important is it to you to listen to their very personal disclosures?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. How affectionate do you feel towards them?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. How important is it to you that they can understand your feelings?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. How important is it to you that they are encouraging and supportive to you when you are unhappy?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. How important is it to you that they show you affection?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate how much you agree or disagree with these statements by marking the option that is closest to what you think/feel is true for you.

--

	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
12. I feel that the clients are more interested in a social conversation than the task at hand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I feel that I am more interested in working on the task at hand than having a social conversation during our encounters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. I am very socially oriented during our encounters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I ask questions to get the clients to open-up.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. I encourage them to disclose personal information while completing the task.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. I follow up their comments with questions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. I ask them more information about what we discussed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. I do not try to find out more information than what I normally would.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. I do not actively seek information from them while completing the task.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
21. Often, they seem to be faking how they feel during our communications.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Often, they seem to be pretending, or putting on an act, during our interactions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

YOUR RELATIONSHIP ORIENTATION					
Please rate how much you agree or disagree with these statements by marking the option that is closest to what you think/feel is true for you.					
	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
23. It bothers me when other people neglect my needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I believe people should go out of their way to be helpful.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I don't especially enjoy giving others aid.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

26. I expect people I know to be responsive to my needs and feelings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
27. I often go out of my way to help another person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
28. I believe it's best not to get involved taking care of other people's personal needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
29. I'm not the sort of person who often comes to the aid of others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
30. When I have a need, I turn to others I know for help.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
31. When people get emotionally upset, I tend to avoid them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
32. When I have a need that others ignore, I'm hurt.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
33. When someone buys me a gift, I try to buy that person as comparable a gift as possible.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
34. I would feel exploited if someone failed to repay me for a favor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
35. When people receive benefits from others, they ought to repay those others right away.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
36. It's best to make sure things are always kept 'even' between two people in a relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

YOUR PERSONAL WELL-BEING					
Please rate how much you agree or disagree with these statements by marking the option that is closest to what you think/feel is true for you.					
	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
37. I feel emotionally drained by my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
38. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
39. I have become less enthusiastic about my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
40. I doubt the significance of my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



41. I can effectively solve the problems that arise in my service job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
42. In my opinion, I am a good employee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
43. After a working day I am often too tired to start other activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
44. In general, it takes me over an hour to feel fully recovered after work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
45. I find it hard to relax at the end of a working day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
46. When I serve my clients (in general) at work, I feel bursting with energy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
47. I find the work that I do full of meaning and purpose.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
48. Time flies when I am serving my clients (in general).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
49. Overall, I am happy at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
50. Overall, I am satisfied with my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING**

This is the end of survey. Thank you for your input! We appreciate it!  
 If you would like to know the results of the survey or the findings of this study, please contact Ying Fu at [y59fu@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:y59fu@uwaterloo.ca).