

# An Examination of the Effects of Post Covid-19 Working Conditions on Employee Wellbeing within the Hospitality Industry in Dublin

Aislinn Cronin

Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, May 2024



# **An Examination of the Effects of Post Covid-19 Working Conditions on Employee Wellbeing within the Hospitality Industry in Dublin**

## **Abstract**

The Irish hospitality industry has experienced a period of huge transition in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Rising costs, staff shortages and employment insecurity are abundant. As employee concerns turn to wellbeing and self-prioritisation, the industry must adapt and adjust if it is to prevail. This study involves the quantitative analysis of cross-sectional questionnaire survey data to gain greater understanding of what effect post Covid-19 working conditions are having on employee wellbeing in the Dublin hospitality industry. The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between the variables present in the study, with experience and environment being treated as independent variables, tested against the dependent variable of satisfaction. The results of this dissertation highlight the importance of positive working conditions in preserving and maintaining employee wellbeing. It is from these findings that greater awareness and understanding can be brought to the importance of the relationship between working conditions and wellbeing, so that the employers and stakeholders of Irish hospitality can begin to work towards the creation of a more supportive and fulfilling environment for their employees.

**Submission of Thesis and Dissertation**

**National College of Ireland**

**Research Students Declaration Form**

**Name:** Aislinn Cronin

**Student Number:** 21174407

**Degree for which thesis is submitted:** Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

**Material submitted for award:**

- (a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.      x
- (b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.      x
- (c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository NORMA (thesis reports and projects).      x
- (d) I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.      x

**Signature of research student:** Aislinn Cronin

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024

## Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: Aislinn Cronin Student number: 21174407

School: School of Business Course: Human Resource Management

Degree to be awarded:  
Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

Title of Thesis:  
An Examination of the Effects of Post Covid-19 Working Conditions on Employee

Wellbeing within the Hospitality Industry in Dublin

An electronic copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. This electronic copy will be accessible in NORMA [norma.ncirl.ie](http://norma.ncirl.ie) the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (NORMA) are made available on open access.

I agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being available for consultation within the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository NORMA.

Signature of Candidate:  
Aislinn Cronin

### For completion by the School:

The aforementioned thesis was received by \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This signed form must be appended to all copies of your thesis submitted to your school.

## Table of Contents

<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>List of Tables .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>List of Appendices .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>12</b>
Introduction .....	12
Background to the Hospitality Industry before the Covid-19 Pandemic .....	12
Coming out of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Economic Perspective.....	14
Coming out of the Pandemic, the Employees Experience.....	15
Emotional Labour and Workplace Dissatisfaction .....	17
Equity Theory, Dissatisfaction and Counterproductivity .....	18
Great Expectations and Customer Incivility .....	20
Conclusion .....	21
<b>Research Question .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>24</b>
Introduction .....	24
Research Philosophy .....	24
Research Instrument .....	25
Research Sample .....	27
Data Analysis.....	28
Limitations and Ethical Considerations .....	29
Conclusion .....	30
<b>Analysis &amp; Findings .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Introduction .....	31
Validity, Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha.....	31
Demographic Features .....	32
Statistical Analysis .....	33
Between Groups two-way ANOVA.....	34
Post-hoc Tests .....	35
Multiple Linear Regression.....	36
Other Findings .....	36
Limitations .....	38

Conclusion .....	39
<b>Discussion</b> .....	40
Introduction .....	40
Interpretation of Findings .....	40
Research Objectives and Implications .....	41
Research Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies .....	45
Conclusion .....	46
<b>Dissertation Conclusion and Future Recommendations</b> .....	47
Future Recommendations .....	49
<b>Personal Learning Statement</b> .....	52
<b>Reference List</b> .....	53
<b>Appendices</b> .....	60
Appendix 1 – The ‘Research Onion’ .....	60
Appendix 2 – Information Sheet.....	61
Appendix 3 – Consent Forms .....	62
Appendix 4 – Debriefing Information .....	63
Appendix 5 – Cronbach’s Alpha .....	64
Appendix 6 – Between Groups Two-Way ANOVA .....	65
Appendix 7 – Multiple Linear Regression.....	67

**List of Tables**

Table 1.....31

Table 2.....32

Table 3.....33

Table 4 .....34

Table 5.....35

## List of Appendices

Appendix 1 .....	53
Appendix 2 .....	54
Appendix 3 .....	55
Appendix 4 .....	57
Appendix 5 .....	57
Appendix 6 .....	58-59
Appendix 7 .....	70



## Introduction

Céad míle fáilte. As the land of ‘a hundred thousand welcomes,’ Ireland has long held a reputation for being hospitable. In relation to the hospitality industry, exceptional customer service, a welcoming environment, and surpassing expectations is what can encourage return visits and memorable experiences. Over the course of the late 2010s, the Irish hospitality industry maintained strong trading performance despite numerous obstacles, including rising interest rates, workforce shortages, and increasing business expenses (Crotty, 2023).

However, the immediacy and urgency of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 would bring unprecedented change to the industry, leaving a lasting impact. The sector was one of the first to be severely affected by the pandemic, suffering from immediate cessation of trade and layoffs, and has since consistently battled with a scarcity of skilled workers (Crotty, 2023). In February 2024, the unemployment rate sat at 4.2%, and while these labour market circumstances are favourable from a social and economic standpoint, they provide a genuine problem for many businesses in terms of hiring and retaining workers due to the tight labour market (The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation, 2024). In order for the industry to recover and remain resilient in the face of future adversity, it is important to understand how employers can attract and also retain these much-needed skilled workers. While attraction is necessary, it is also vital to hold on to the invaluable, experienced employees who are already currently working in hospitality.

In understanding how to attract and retain, it is important to consider what has caused individuals to leave or consider leaving the industry. In light of the pandemic, it is now more than ever that individuals are prioritising their physical and mental wellbeing, and it seems only fair that Irish hospitality give as much priority and urgency to its employee’s needs, as is offered to those of the customer (Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media, 2022). An individual's level of job satisfaction reflects how competitive they are in meeting their employment needs (Pandey and Chauhan, 2021). Where an employee is satisfied in their employment, they will be motivated to perform and engage as is expected or they will surpass and exceed these expectations. In comparison, where an employee is dissatisfied with their employment, they may choose to engage in counterproductivity, or even quiet quitting. The characteristics of the workplace environment can have an impact on employees' willingness to remain innovative, enthusiastic, connected to fellow employees, and committed to their jobs (Zhenjing *et al.*, 2022). Understanding and addressing the

elements impacting employee satisfaction are crucial steps towards recovery and long-term success but can also aid the recruitment and retention issues facing Irish hospitality.

The research of Unite the Union (2021), as well as that of Dr Deirdre Curran (2021), investigates the working conditions of the hospitality industry in Ireland before the Covid-19 outbreak. While these studies investigate the working conditions employees experience, there is little mention of the human impact that these issues, for example relating to employee job satisfaction. Furthermore, large scale surveys of a similar nature conducted in a time period after the pandemic have not yet been published. This study explores the current industry conditions, examining the relationship between working conditions and employee wellbeing in the Dublin hospitality industry.

### **Research Aim & Objectives**

Regarding the recruitment, retention and turnover issues facing Irish hospitality, a greater understanding of the negatives or shortcomings of the working environment and employment features could offer employers and stakeholders the opportunity to implement real, positive change in the industry. Upon completion of this research, it can be said that greater understanding has been gained of the current working conditions within the industry in Dublin. It has become clear that there is negativity surrounding employee satisfaction within hospitality in Dublin, and some of the driving factors creating such a relationship have been identified. The findings of this dissertation can allow for greater understanding of the impact that working conditions can have on employee satisfaction and wellbeing in Irish hospitality, while also outlining and charting potential avenues for future research and positive industry advancement.

### **Research Design**

This research involved a mono method quantitative analysis of data, gathered through an online questionnaire survey. The time horizon was be cross-sectional, as data collection took place in a singular instance, without an interval for secondary data collection. The survey was created on Microsoft Forms, with questions being answered using a four-point Likert scale. Questions within the survey were related to issues such as job conditions, employee experience, workplace satisfaction, and the working environment. The collected survey data

was then analysed using the statistical programme IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27). Upon data collection and statistical analysis, a significant relationship was found to exist between environment and satisfaction levels, and this can be related more generally to the overall wellbeing of hospitality industry employees. The findings of this research have not only confirmed the existence of widespread dissatisfaction, but also offer insight into some of the potential reasons why participants are not currently satisfied in their workplace, highlighting the prevailing issues plaguing the hospitality industry in Dublin.

### **Overview of Dissertation Structure:**

Introduction – Introduces the research field, the Irish hospitality industry, giving context and background. The research aim & objectives, design, and findings are also outlined.

Literature Review – Will use existing literature to examine the conditions of the Irish hospitality industry both before and after the Covid-19 pandemic. In examining the economic and employee concerns, and outlining aspects of the employee experience, the gap in the literature will become clear.

Research Question – Based on the gap identified in the literature, the research objectives and hypothesis relating to the dissertation will be detailed.

Methodology – An overview of the chosen research methodology for this dissertation, including the research philosophy, theory development, methodological choice, and strategy. The intended techniques and procedures, as well as the limitations and relevant ethical considerations will also be examined.

Analysis & Findings – The statistical analyses performed on the collected data will be presented, as well as an overview of other relevant and important findings.

Discussion – Interpretation of the results of this research in relation to the research objectives and hypothesis. The research implications in relation to the literature reviewed will be discussed. Consideration will also be given to the limitations of this study and recommendations will be made for relevant future studies.

Conclusion & Recommendations – Concludes the dissertation, reemphasising the significance of the findings of the research performed. Consideration given to the implications of these findings and issues relating to the implementation of such in the future.

## **Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in Ireland in 2020 brought about seismic shifts in the landscape of the hospitality industry. Government-mandated restrictions and lockdowns led to widespread job losses and financial insecurity, laying bare the shortcomings of an industry already contending with vast systemic issues. A report by the Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, and Media (2022) stressed that as businesses struggled to rebuild there was an emergence of employees reporting salary concerns, job insecurity, detrimental workplace habits, and a lack of trade union representation. In the aftermath of the pandemic, and as the sector began to recover, it can be said that the human dimension of hospitality may have been overlooked. The experience of hospitality staff is naturally multifaceted.

Hospitality employees perform emotional labour and experience inequities in abundance. The economic success and importance of the industry in Ireland can often overshadow the underlying dissatisfaction, discontent, and disillusionment experienced by employees in the industry (Power, 2020). According to Mansfield, Daykin, and Kay (2020), the term wellbeing can be associated with several concepts, such as fulfilment, quality of life, satisfaction, personal development and prosperity, capability, positive connections, and agency. In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is now more than ever that job satisfaction, morale and wellbeing are at the fore of employee's priorities. As work-life balance becomes more topical than ever, it seems only fair that the Irish hospitality industry gives as much priority and urgency to its employee's needs, as is offered to those of the customer (Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, and Media, 2022). It is only with a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by hospitality employees can meaningful change happen within the industry.

### **Background to the Hospitality Industry before the Covid-19 Pandemic**

In examining relevant literature in relation to the proposed area of research for this dissertation, it is important to establish the conditions of the hospitality industry immediately before the Covid-19 pandemic. The hospitality industry has a longstanding reputation of being a large source of employment and contributor to the Irish economy. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2017, 164,000 people were employed directly in 'accommodation and food service activities' according to the Central Statistics Office (Fáilte Ireland, 2017), and the same period in 2018 saw 181,200 people in direct employment (Fáilte Ireland, 2018). The Allied Irish Banks

(AIB) report on Irish Hospitality and Tourism (2019) paints an overall positive image of the sectors positioning pre-covid. The quality of Irish hospitality offerings is described as at their greatest in history, thanks to substantial investments in the industry over the previous decade. The report acknowledges the success of Dublin's hospitality establishments, which despite obstacles such as Brexit, were able to maintain and boost profits, as well as sustaining the quality and variety of offerings. The Fáilte Ireland figures (2018; 2017) and the AIB report (2019) offer insight to the commercial background of the hospitality industry in the lead up to the Covid-19 pandemic, which gives contextualisation to the economic environment in Ireland at said time.

While economically the industry might have been on a steady, upward trajectory, the employee experience did not reflect this same level of prosperity. Baum's (2020) research emphasises hospitality's longstanding history of rapidly hiring and firing new employees to manage fluctuating demand, in turn creating a culture of high turnover and instability. Further work from Baum (2019) reemphasises this high-turnover culture as increasingly pressurising to retained employees who are left to manage the fallout of the constant coming and going of temporary individuals. Baum's earlier work (2019; Josiam *et al.* 2010) reinforces this narrative by acknowledging the often-negative perceptions associated with the hospitality industry because of these vast turnover levels and the precarious nature of the work. Baum *et al.* (2020) remains consistent in the argument that these are longstanding features of the industry, and unless there are significant changes made, hospitality will continue to suffer the deserved ramifications of being an unattractive sector with an unsustainable workforce.

O'Leary and Deegan (2005) further emphasise the idea of the hospitality sector having a well-established reputation for squandering highly skilled and competent individuals. They argue that this 'wastage' of employable persons, who may in fact be highly skilled, can be seen as one of the main reasons why hospitality has issues attracting and retaining the desired employees. Josiam *et al.* (2010) as well as O'Leary and Deegan (2005) highlight the more unfavourable aspects of working in hospitality, which is further cemented by the writing of Putra, Cho and Liu (2017), who recognise the negative effects that such working conditions can have on employee motivation and retention. If employees are working long, unsociable hours for poor remuneration and the longevity of the employment is unpredictable at best, it is likely that individuals will look elsewhere for more secure, stable, and well-paying jobs.

These works collectively offer a snapshot of the industries conditions for employees pre pandemic. Baum *et al.* (2020) and O’Leary and Deegan (2005) raise similar themes in relation to the unfavourable nature of hospitality working conditions being the standard norm, while Josiam *et al.* (2010) and Putra *et al.* (2017) offer evidence of how this kind of working environment will only further negatively impact employee motivation and retention issues. It is evident that hospitality has a rather negative reputation, as it is portrayed as an industry that remains indifferent to its own shortcomings and either oblivious or ignorant of the impact these conditions are having on the welfare and morale of employees. These findings, alongside the Fáilte Ireland data (2017; 2018) and AIB (2019) report, helps to contextualise the conditions of an industry that was already tiptoeing on the edge of crisis before the onset of Covid-19 restrictions and lockdown. By failing to address these issues, hospitality is not only eroding employee morale but also undermining its long-term viability.

#### Coming out of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Economic Perspective

Irish hospitality was one of the first sectors to suffer significant job losses because of the government mandated restrictions in 2020, and the consequences were felt almost immediately. Unemployment and financial insecurity, as well as the general sense of uncertainty, anxiety and isolation afflicted for months until the Summer of 2020, when Covid-19 restrictions began to lift in a phased process (Nagar and Mathur, 2023; Gov.ie, 2020). In the aftermath of the pandemic, the Irish hospitality industry was in much more precarious circumstances than beforehand. The writing of Power (2020) emphasises the importance of hospitality in Ireland, and how the economic recovery of the sector after the height of the pandemic would only be possible through substantial government support. He writes of how the industry is an important source of employment across the country, an essential aspect of Irish tourism, and how the hospitality sector offers a considerable economic and financial contribution on a national scale, and therefore its recovery is crucial (Power, 2020). A report from the Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, and Media (2021) argued that businesses in the hospitality industry have faced—and will continue to face—severe challenges due to the economic and social fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Deloitte Domestic Market Review (2022) compliments the work of Power (2020) by presenting the immediate and long-term difficulties which faced the sector, as well as

measures available to assist businesses in ensuring their capacity to survive the pandemics aftereffects. Insolvency, liquidity issues and multiple extended periods of closure throughout the pandemic presented the hospitality sector a dire situation, whereby government support was seen as vital in ensuring industry survival. Budget 2021 offered a range of new supports to business owners, including extensions of the Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme, and reduced VAT rates for the sector (Deloitte, 2022). Policies, such as the COVID Restrictions Support Scheme (CRSS), together with industry-specific initiatives like the Fáilte Ireland business supports, were essential to the survival of hospitality related enterprises and jobs (Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, and Media, 2021). While hospitality is of undeniable importance to Ireland's economy, it has deep-rooted vulnerabilities which were exposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, highlighting its dependence on government assistance in recovery, as well as its fragility and unpredictability as an employer. Without substantial reforms to address these shortcomings, the sector will remain vulnerable to future crises and unable to achieve sustainable growth.

#### Coming out of the Covid- 19 Pandemic, the Employee Experience

For many employees working in the hospitality industry before Covid-19, their experience afterwards may have seemed like business as usual. Baum *et al.* (2020) maintain that the pandemic's effects on the hospitality industry's workforce have not brought about any new challenges; rather, it has amplified existing issues, such as employees' precarious position in the workforce, low pay, and unfavourable working conditions. This idea that unfavourable conditions is the standard norm in the industry is further corroborated by Baquero (2023), arguing that while issues relating to high turnover and instability will emerge naturally in other industries from time to time, the hospitality sector has always been particularly plagued by such. Baum *et al.* (2020) and Baquero (2023) emphasise the unfavorability of working in hospitality, and clearly this is not a newfound concept, as already highlighted by O'Leary and Deegan (2005) and Josiam *et al.* (2010). However, it is important to be able to fully grasp what the conditions experienced by employees are, and the environment which can be expected in hospitality, if it is to be later understood the impact this can have on an individual's experience of the industry.

A 2021 report published by Unite the Union focuses solely on the employees of the hospitality industry, with an emphasis on highlighting their working conditions. The survey

performed as part of the report touches on issues such as regulated breaks, gender pay gaps, tips and gratuities, as well as understaffing and harassment. While the hospitality sector rebuilds and regenerates after the pandemic, keeping these employee issues in mind can help to create a different, more favourable environment going forward (Unite the Union, 2021). The report emphasises the undesirable conditions of the industry, but there is little to no mention of the human impact these issues can have, for example relating to employee job satisfaction and workplace morale.

Curran (2021) compliments the research of Unite the Union (2021) by investigating also the working conditions experienced by employees within the sector, offering constructive ideas and feedback for employers and businesses to make positive changes. Curran's findings are reiterated similarly in the Union the Union (2021) report, which acknowledges the importance of Currans (2021) work. This can be seen to signify the consistency and continuity of poor conditions in the industry and is likely to be why hospitality receives its unattractive and negative depiction, as iterated by Baum *et al.* (2020). The lacking availability of skilled individuals was a pressing concern as the pandemic subsided (Lastres, Karatepe, and Okumus, 2024), and as the employees of the hospitality industry are of central importance, without them businesses may find it near impossible to function. Research such as that of Curran (2021), and the subsequent suggestions outlined in her report, for example listening to employee concerns rather than only considering the financial implications, are important for employers to be mindful of when contemplating how they can make beneficial changes to the working environment of their business to aid in attraction and retention issues.

Employees in the industry are the foundation of the sector, and personal witnesses to the negativity of hospitality both before and after the pandemic (Liu Lastres, Huang and Bao, 2023). Their experiences of working in undesirable conditions emphasise the urgent need for meaningful change within the industry, with a shift towards prioritising employee satisfaction and wellbeing to address the longstanding attraction and retention issues. The outbreak of Covid-19 was an unforeseen event which brought unprecedented changes to the industry; however, it is the response to such changes which is of utmost importance. Failure to acknowledge and address these shortcomings is a risk to prolonging the industry's negative reputation.



### Emotional Labour and Workplace Dissatisfaction

Emotional labour is described by Hochschild (1983) as the control of emotions to produce a physically and facially visible performance for the public when providing services. In other words, emotional labour involves the management of one's feelings or reactions to operate in an acceptable and presentable manner when dealing with customers. As a result of preconceptions or ideals that may be had relating to the customer service experience, hospitality employees adopt emotional labour tactics to modify, regulate, and communicate the emotions that their organisation wants them to in interpersonal interactions (Vashdi, Katz-Navon and Delegach, 2022). Vashdi *et al.* (2022) theorise that employees may suffer emotional dissonance that necessitates the use of emotional labour methods to manage their emotions when there is a disconnect between their real feelings and the expectations deriving from the work environment. Remaining consistent with this theory, Elshaer, Azazz and Fayyad (2022) identify that due to the hospitality industry often being a highly pressurised and stressful atmosphere, employees can develop and adopt coping mechanisms to survive in their workplace environment. These coping mechanisms can be seen as tools of endurance utilised by individuals to assist in the management of their emotional dissonance, as despite being overwhelmed or frustrated by the workplace, employees can identify that the priority is to remain resilient and perform as is expected by their organisation for the customers benefit.

The theme of resilience is evident in the work of Barbhuiya and Chatterjee (2022). Their writing maintains that the psychological resilience of employees to endure adverse conditions and circumstances can be seen as reasoning why hospitality businesses were able to reopen and remain open after the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Employees putting aside their concerns or stresses to perform in the workplace in a manner which is expected and acceptable to their organisation is relevant to emotional labour. However, this is also connected to the work of Elshaer *et al.* (2022), who maintain that hospitality employees will ultimately find the means to cope with adversity to do their job because they are accustomed to working in a pressurised environment.

The performative nature of hospitality, whereby employees must meet preconceived ideals of the customer service experience, may have negative psychological effects including workplace stress and burnout (De Castro, Agnew and Fitzgerald, 2004). Furthermore, feelings of stress or pressure in the workplace can not only escalate employee burnout, but also workplace dissatisfaction and employee withdrawal. Yu *et al.* (2021) argues that while the Covid-19 outbreak highlighted the adaptability and agility of certain sectors, it also

highlighted the fragility of others, one of which being hospitality. Considering the industry's diverse and evolving nature, the expectations put on employees to be agile, adaptable, and able to change in line with the sectors development, all for poor compensation, it is no wonder employees can become resentful of their workplace (Yu *et al.*, 2021). Due to the irregular nature of scheduling in hospitality, employees must be prepared to give up time in the evenings and at the weekend, that is potentially necessary for fulfilling family obligations (Zhao, Qu and Liu, 2014). Struggling between work and family commitments can lead to job tension, which in the hospitality industry is likely to already be a present factor. Literature such as that from Elshaer *et al.* (2022) Yu *et al.* (2021) and De Castro *et al.* (2004) emphasises the impact that working conditions can have on employee wellbeing, and the effects heightened pressure and negative environments can have on employees psychologically. While the direct connection between working conditions and wellbeing may not be directly stated, it is becoming blatantly obvious, especially when considering the demanding nature of the industry. Given the vital role that employees play in hospitality, their wellbeing should be of paramount priority to employers.

#### Equity Theory, Dissatisfaction and Counterproductivity

Adams' Equity theory (1963) maintains that people are more motivated when they receive equitable treatment, and therefore adequate benefits and employment practices are necessary. Perceived inequity can vastly impact how an employee is performing in their role, and how much effort they are willing to put in (Armstrong, 2012). In their employment and in organisations that are similar, employees compare their labour to that of relevant others to better determine what is appropriate. Job satisfaction refers to how much individuals like or dislike their jobs. Interpersonal conflicts, stress, inadequate wages, and overload are the main causes of job dissatisfaction (Heimerl *et al.*, 2020). Many of these aspects are prevalent in the hospitality industry (Popa *et al.*, 2023; Baquero, 2023), and therefore it is not surprising that employees become dissatisfied and disengaged by their employment overtime when they are subjected to such conditions.

Singh and Loncar (2010) argue that when employees feel inequity or unfairness because of their workplace characteristics, they may try to make things right by cutting back on inputs like taking longer breaks, more absenteeism, and less productivity—all of which can be quite expensive for the employer. In a predominantly low paying industry where employees do not

always receive equitable treatment or benefits, it is not unreasonable to assume that hospitality employees might compare their compensation with that received by others in similar employment (Baum, 2020; Armstrong, 2012; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005).

Dissatisfaction with compensation can lead to a decline in commitment to the job, and a spike in employee turnover (Singh and Loncar, 2010). Turnover is a primary concern for employers and can be costly, however, pay satisfaction can be the driving factor which pushes employees out the door.

Adams (1963) maintains that an individual will experience or resonate with feelings of inequity when their effort is high and the compensation is low, in comparison to another person who puts in less or similar effort for a better rate of remuneration. In relation to the hospitality industry, employees that are working for poor remuneration in a highly pressurised environment with unfavourable conditions, may be inclined to leave their job if they believe they can experience a greater sense of equity elsewhere (Elshaer *et al.*, 2022; Unite the Union, 2021; Baum, 2020). Employees who choose to remain in their employment but are still unsatisfied with aspects of their job or working conditions, may engage in withdrawal behaviours (Lastres, Karatepe and Okumus, 2024). Lugosi (2019) and others argue that the hospitality industry and related careers are known for being aggressive, intimidating, and demanding environments. They further theorise that the hospitality environment is synonymous with the idea of deviance and therefore this behaviour is somewhat expected, but also normalised (Lugosi, 2019; Chen, Hu, and King, 2018; Boukis, 2016). Given the vast expectations placed on employees, it is not unbelievable that individuals may turn to counterproductivity to express their dissatisfaction with the hospitality industry.

While having unrealistic expectations in return for poor remuneration can create ill-feeling amongst employees, this pressure created by job demands can leave individuals feeling insecure of their abilities (Baquero, 2023). The work of Yang and Zu (2023) furthers this argument, stating that while high expectations and poor conditions can accelerate staffing issues, the role of management is increasingly important here. Their theory that abusive supervision can negatively impact employee wellbeing and job satisfaction (Yang and Zu, 2023) is similar to work from Popa *et al.* (2023) which again acknowledges that feelings of pressure, stress and dissatisfaction are commonplace in the industry. While these conditions are existent, it is the response or reaction from management, or lack thereof, that will

determine whether the outcome is going to be positive or negative (Popa *et al.*, 2023; Yang and Zu 2023; Curran, 2021; Baum *et al.*, 2020). Research has highlighted the significant challenges faced by the industry in terms of recruitment and retention in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the absence of adequate managerial support can further exacerbate these issues. The connection between working conditions and wellbeing has already been identified to be of significance and can also be seen as the gap in the research landscape, as much of the reviewed works focus on either working conditions or employee experience and wellbeing respectively, rather than in conjunction. By addressing this gap, a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the relationship between working conditions and employee wellbeing can be gained, allowing for positive solutions and the implementation of such to begin.

#### Great Expectations and Customer Incivility

Hospitality is an industry where great expectations are placed upon employees (Barbhuiya and Chatterjee, 2022; Yu *et al.*, 2021). Economic insecurity and disenchantment with employment in hospitality can cause workers in the industry to think about changing occupations and looking into other sectors (Liu-Lastres *et al.*, 2023). However, the pressurised expectations placed upon employees can also result in disinterest and increased turnover. As highlighted by Wallace and Coughlan (2022), hospitality employees deal with challenging working conditions, numerous incidents of customer incivility and frequent occurrences of burnout. The nature of the hospitality industry, with its unpredictable work schedules, fluctuating income levels, and perceived inequity in workloads, can give rise to motivations for deviancy (Wallace and Coughlin, 2022). This argument is like that of Singh and Loncar (2010) and Lugosi (2019) in that because of the high expectations and unfavourable working conditions of the industry, counterproductive or undesirable behaviour is expected and in turn normalised as employees merely just expressing their dissatisfaction and feelings.

Customer incivility is described by Vo-Thanh *et al.* (2022) as acting inappropriately by speaking rudely, making aggressive requests, or giving abrupt answers to staff members. Vo-Thanh *et al.* (2022) further theorise that customer incivility can increase employee counterproductivity and enhance the need to develop coping mechanisms and endurance tactics. Empowering leadership moderates the relationships between workplace deviance,

emotional behaviour, job satisfaction and firm performance (Voorhees, Fombelle and Bone, 2020). However, often there is a lack of supportive or empowering management within the industry, which can leave employees feeling unsupported and dissatisfied (Popa *et al.*, 2023; Yang and Zu 2023). Bala and Sharma (2021) emphasise that a pleasant workplace can attract new talent and retain the old, and that the work environment, job satisfaction and job security are among the most crucial factors that can help employees to achieve greater efficiency and productivity. With great expectations placed on employees in a pressurised environment where customer incivility is frequent, it is understandable how hospitality has a negative reputation, and why there is a high level of turnover in the industry (Booyens, 2022).

### Conclusion

The examination of the hospitality industry in this literature review highlights the enduring challenges faced by employees in the sector. Hospitality is synonymous with unstable employment, low wages, and poor working conditions (Baum *et al.*, 2020; Josiam *et al.*, 2010), and the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has only further exacerbated some of these issues. While efforts have been made to sustain businesses post pandemic through government interventions and financial support (Deloitte, 2022), greater attention is needed for the often-overlooked hospitality employees. The literature reviewed has highlighted the prevalence of inequitable treatment and poor conditions, particularly in terms of emotional labour, workplace dissatisfaction, and the impact of customer incivility on employee morale. The Covid-19 pandemic has showed how resilient workers can be in the face of adversity but has also made it clear that structural reforms are required to resolve persistent problems with job discontent and workplace stresses. While there is ample evidence pointing to the negative effects of working conditions on employee wellbeing (Elshaer *et al.*, 2022; Yu *et al.*, 2021), there remains a gap in the literature regarding the specific means through which these conditions impact and effect employee wellbeing. Greater understanding of the connection between these two factors is crucial for the evolution of effective interventions and better working practices across the hospitality industry. By going forward and addressing this research gap, the hospitality industry's sustained recovery can begin. Tackling the underlying reasons for employee dissatisfaction can allow for supporting measures to be put in place for staff. In placing a high priority on the wellbeing of its workers, hospitality businesses can develop more resilient and effective employees, which will benefit the industry's performance, ensuring its long-term sustainability and success.

## Research Question

The literature examined and reviewed in the previous section gives context and background to the hospitality industry before, during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. This contextualisation is necessary to give a frame of reference which can be related to the research aim for this dissertation, in order to understand where it has originated from. Coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, the hospitality industry was faced with huge levels of uncertainty and instability (Healy, 2021). The literature reviewed mentions the notably negative conditions of the industry, however, there can be seen to be a disconnect between the cause and effect. Research discusses the longstanding negative perceptions of the industry (Baquero, 2023; Baum, 2020; Josiam *et al.*, 2010), or focuses on the disengagement and frustration felt by employees (Popa *et al.*, 2023; Yu *et al.*, 2021). While negative feelings are emphasised to exist, it is not necessarily detailed how this impacts employee's wellbeing, more so that it evokes counterproductive behaviours and turnover issues (Lastres *et al.*, 2024; Lugosi, 2019).

The effect which these identified undesirable working conditions are currently having on employees within the industry can be seen as an underdeveloped aspect of research. It is necessary to gain greater understanding into how employees perceive the new service reality after Covid-19 (Voorhees, Fombelle, and Bone, 2020), and it is with this information that businesses can adapt and change for the better, rather than accept negativity and low job satisfaction as an industry norm. The aim of this dissertation is to examine how the post Covid-19 working conditions are affecting employee wellbeing in the hospitality sector, with the overarching research question being, 'How are the post Covid-19 working conditions effecting employee wellbeing within the hospitality industry in Dublin?'.

It is anticipated that the following research objectives and hypothesis will assist in answering the primary research question:

*Objective 1* - To understand the current conditions within the hospitality industry in Dublin, examining various aspects such as the work environment, working situations, and employee circumstances.

*Hypothesis 1:* Null (H0) – There is no relationship between post pandemic working conditions and employee wellbeing. Alternative (H1) –There is a relationship between the working conditions post pandemic and employee wellbeing.

*Objective 2* - To examine whether the negativity surrounding employee satisfaction, as emphasised in the literature review, is commonplace in the industry in Dublin.

*Objective 3* – To understand the driving factors creating this dissatisfaction if such a relationship is found to be existent.

## **Methodology**

### **Introduction**

This section will identify and outline the appropriate research methodology which will be used for this dissertation. The ‘research onion’ (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019) (see Appendix 1) is a diagram that illustrates the important considerations when selecting data collection methods and analysis techniques. The different stages or layers of the diagram act as a guide for researchers when developing a research methodology. The following work will utilise the ‘research onion’ as a framework in order to identify the appropriate research methodology for this dissertation, detailing the research philosophy, theory development, methodological choice, and strategy (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). The intended techniques and procedures will also be outlined, as well as the time horizon. Consideration will also be given to alternative methodologies which may potentially have been suitable for this kind of research. The limitations related to the chosen research methodology and the important, relevant ethical considerations will also be outlined and detailed.

### **Research Philosophy**

The first layer of the research onion is philosophy. It is necessary to consider the research philosophy relevant to this dissertation to determine where the proposed study is to be appropriately situated. Ontology, concerned with the nature of reality, the study and origin of being, and how individuals exist in the world (Quinlan, 2011), is relevant to this dissertation as the main research question seeks to explore the relationship between working conditions and employee wellbeing. By attempting to explore this relationship and gain a greater understanding of these post Covid-19 working conditions, the research takes an ontological stance. Epistemology is the study of knowledge assumptions, including whether information is legitimate, valid, and acceptable as well as how individuals can pass on knowledge to others (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Partaking in quantitative research to generate further knowledge in relation to the hospitality industry in Dublin can be seen to align with epistemology. One of the main purposes of research is to contribute to knowledge (Quinlan, 2011). The collection of data and furthering of knowledge in relation to the aims of this dissertation in an objective manner through standardised research methods, such as the use of surveys, are epistemological features. It can be maintained that this dissertation involves both ontological and epistemological aspects. However, the proposed research for this



dissertation is more epistemological, as it is directly related to the collection of data for the generation of greater knowledge on the hospitality industry.

The positivist research paradigm endeavours to stay objective and detached from the study and data to prevent biasing of the outcomes. This means that, to the greatest extent feasible, the researcher would conduct study in a value-free manner (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Post-positivists acknowledge that we cannot observe the world completely objectively, and that our subjectivity impacts reality (Maksimović and Evtimov, 2023). In relation to this dissertation, adopting a post-positivist stance can be seen as more realistic, as while the researchers' intentions are to remain objective and detached from the research, subjectivity can be unavoidable.

The theory development aspect of the 'research onion' is related to whether the proposed research is deductive or inductive. Inductive research involves going from the specific to the general, as in the process of forming hypotheses based on actual observations of a phenomena of interest (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018). Research is deductive when a broad range of assertions about a given phenomenon is narrowed down to specific testable hypotheses, and the act of testing requires the use of relevant data (Adams, Khan, Raeside, White, 2007). The research for this dissertation is deductive, as there are testable hypotheses in relation to the main research aim. With deductive research, the conclusions must come from the data (Balnaves and Caputi, 2001). The participant answers gathered from the questionnaire survey for this dissertation can be analysed, giving conclusive results to the testable hypotheses.

### Research Instrument

The methodological choice for this dissertation involves a mono method quantitative analysis of data, gathered through an online questionnaire survey. The survey strategy aligns with deductive research and is positioned in the positivist paradigm (Saunders *et al.*, 2019; Quinlan, 2011), which correlates with the chosen approach for this dissertation. The quantitative method is particularly successful when it is necessary to discover factors that impact the end result, to study the consequences of an activity, or to test hypotheses (Maksimović and Evtimov, 2023). Quantitative research methods offers the researcher the opportunity to conduct the online questionnaire survey in a timeframe which is suited to the

constraints of this dissertation, and in a format which is accessible for participants. A content analysis study by Shum *et al.* (2021) into the most common research methods used in hospitality research in the 2010s found that survey designs were utilized in 51% of the 1,401 examined studies. Also, quantitative research methods are most suitable for this dissertation as hypothesis testing will be being carried out. The null hypothesis related to the research question is that there is no relationship between post pandemic working conditions and employee wellbeing. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is that there is a relationship between working conditions in the hospitality industry and employee wellbeing. The time horizon for this dissertation will be cross-sectional, as the data collection will occur at a single moment in time, with no interval for secondary or follow-up data collection.

Qualitative research often aligns with an inductive approach (Saunders *et al.*, 2019), and can involve methodology such as interviews. In-depth interviews are demanding of resources for both the researcher and the candidate, but the benefits include greater variety of replies to questions (Biggam, 2021). While interviews may have provided more flexibility and room for greater explanation when answering questions, conducting mass interviews to attain enough participants may not have been possible given the time constraints associated with this dissertation. Qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups, whereby participants can offer more detailed answers, can also lead to greater ethical considerations in relation to the information which may be divulged.

The American Psychological Association Work and Wellbeing Survey (2022) is a published method of measuring satisfaction within the workplace. The Inside Out Hospitality (2021) report published by Dr Deirdre Curran also uses a questionnaire survey to investigate conditions in the hospitality industry. The survey questionnaire for this dissertation contained a combination of questions from both works. The Unite the Union (2021) study of working conditions in the hospitality sector in Ireland is another example of research conducted using questionnaire survey format. Accessing hospitality workers can be difficult (Curran, 2021), and given the dynamic and demanding nature of the industry environment, an online survey is easy to distribute, and it is quick for participants to complete. The survey for this dissertation was created on Microsoft Form, with the answers being scored using a four-point Likert scale. The questionnaire survey contained an information sheet (see Appendix 2), a consent form (see Appendix 3), and debriefing information (see Appendix 4). The questionnaire involved three sections, with each section targeting an individual research

objective. Questions within the survey sought to examine issues related to job conditions, satisfaction levels, employee experience and the working environment.

### Research Sample

It is not feasible to involve every member of the population in an in-depth study while working with a huge populus (Quinlan, 2011). As the hospitality industry within Ireland would have a vast population, it is necessary to obtain a research sample in order to make the study viable. Therefore, the research sample for this dissertation was obtained from the target population, being individuals who currently work in the hospitality industry in the Dublin area. Dublin is the most accessible region for the researcher to contact potential participants, and licenced trade in Dublin employs a significant amount of people (Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, and Media, 2022).

Probability methods, for example simple random sampling, works best when you have an accurate and conveniently available sample frame (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Probability sampling implies that each member of the target population has a chance of being selected to partake in the research. As the sample obtained for this dissertation will be likely small in comparison to the total population, it is it is difficult to randomly select individuals to partake that will in turn accurately represent the larger populus. Probability sampling can also often be more time consuming whereby excess concentration and effort is required when selecting the participants and creating the sampling frame (Quinlan, 2011). Therefore, the participants for this dissertation will be gathered through the non-probability methods of convenience as well as snowball sampling.

Convenience sampling allows the researcher to access participants who are easiest and most opportune to include, for example individuals in the locality of Dublin. Snowball sampling is a method which is suitable to the time constraints of this dissertation. Individuals who respond to the survey, can identify further members of the population, who in turn identify additional participants, and thus the sample increases like a snowball rolling in snow (Saunders, *et al.* 2019). Snowball sampling can allow for a greater or faster response rate, as when the questionnaire survey is sent on by the initial participants, the pool of individuals with access can grow quicker than if solely the researcher was to target potential candidates. A study employing quantitative methods for small-scale research projects, such those done by

students at universities, should have a minimum of 50 individuals or units in the sample (Quinlan, 2011). Convenience and snowball sampling allows the researcher a greater chance of achieving the minimum participants numbers within the set time constraints. Given the diversity of the Irish hospitality industry, a pilot study was carried out to ensure clarity and conciseness of the questions for the survey, and to make sure the questions were easy to understand and interpret. A pilot test can help improve the validity of a data gathering instrument (Quinlan, 2011), and as quantitative rather than qualitative methods are being used, it is important that the questions are as detailed and clear as possible in order to receive definite answers. This pilot study was carried out within a workplace that was then not used for the main study, and the survey was altered accordingly based on feedback and opinion given from discussion with pilot participants.

### Data Analysis

The techniques and procedures aspect is the final layer of the research onion (Saunders *et al.*, 2019), and relates to the data collection and analysis techniques chosen. The methodology for this dissertation uses the quantitative research method of surveys to collect data which was then analysed using inferential and descriptive statistics through the statistical programme IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 27). The data collected was firstly downloaded into a Microsoft Excel Form, and was then cleaned, screened, and reorganised before uploading to SPSS to begin analysis. Questions from the survey questionnaire can be broadly divided into two sections, experience, and environment. These two sections can be treated as independent variables, experience (low/high) and environment (low/medium/high), to be tested against the dependent variable of satisfaction (low/high). As a result, this study employs a 3x3 factorial design. A two-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVAs) will be conducted on the data, and these results as well as that of subsequent secondary testing will allow the researcher to determine whether the null hypothesis is to be accepted or rejected.

The first research objective, to understand the current working conditions of the hospitality industry in Dublin, will become answerable upon examining the answers to the survey questionnaire for this research, as the questions involved relate to the working environment and current conditions, satisfaction, and the employee experience. The results of the survey can be analysed to determine whether the working conditions which have been examined convey a similar negativity which is prevalent in the literature reviewed, targeting research objective two. If collected survey responses indicate themes of frustration and dissatisfaction

in certain sections, for example in relation to the working environment, greater understanding can potentially be gained of the drivers of discontent amongst industry employees, targeting the third and final objective.

### Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Ethically, informed consent is of huge importance when collecting data from participants for research purposes. The information sheet and consent form included in the survey questionnaire for this dissertation can be used as a record of the individual's awareness of the research purpose, and what is expected of them as a participant (Quinlan, 2011). The Covid-19 pandemic impacted individuals in differing and varying ways. It is important that this is considered when determining which questions will be used in the survey to ensure they are suitable and appropriate. This study falls in line with the National College of Ireland Ethical Guidelines and Procedures for Research Involving Human Participants (2017), as the participants data will be kept anonymous, and the data will only be used for this study, with no secondary usage. Participants who partake in the survey will be over the age of eighteen. Two crucial and fundamental concepts in research ethics are anonymity and confidentiality (Quinlan, 2011). The use of an online survey questionnaire for this dissertation allows for participants to remain anonymous, while answering the questions in a confidential manner.

Limitations related to this dissertation include time constraints and sample size. The target population is naturally very large, however, by only accessing participants from the Dublin area, the sample may not give an entirely accurate representation of the whole population. This issue is also impacted by time constraints, as narrowing the sample to the Dublin area is consistent with deadlines related to this dissertation. Time constraints will also affect the length of time in which the survey is available for participants to access and complete, as naturally a longer timeframe may allow for a greater number of participants. In-depth and semi-structured interviews enable researchers to provoke and explore themes further, whereas surveys do not (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). As a result, a survey does not allow participants to provide as much depth as an interview, providing less insight into the industry than would be gained from approaches such as thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews. With questionnaire surveys, the researcher is depending on data that individuals have self-reported, meaning they are giving answers based on what they think is true or what they have personally experienced (Mertler, 2016). While this can seem ideal on the surface,

participants can often give answers they anticipate will be expected, or in the case where one participant shares the survey to another, there can be encouragement to give answers of a similar nature.

## Conclusion

The above methodology section utilises the ‘research onion’ (Saunders *et al.*, 2019) as a framework in order to identify the appropriate research practices for this dissertation, detailing the research philosophy, theory development, methodological choice, and strategy. The investigation of the research paradigm and philosophy, as well as the combination of both ontological and epistemological factors, conveys the research's multifaceted nature, which leans towards epistemology due to the emphasis on knowledge generation. The research instrument and design sections highlight the use of quantitative methods through an online questionnaire survey. The deductive aspect of the study is clear, with testable hypotheses developed from specific theories about the potential relationship between working conditions and employee wellbeing.

The discussion on the research sample outlines the practical challenges of obtaining a representative sample from the vast hospitality industry in Ireland. Non-probability methods, specifically convenience and snowball sampling, are chosen to address these challenges efficiently, considering the time constraints related to this dissertation. The limitations and ethical issues considered emphasises the significance of informed consent, confidentiality, and participant anonymity. Time constraints and sample size limitations are addressed, as well as awareness of the shortcomings that arise from a survey format, being that it may lack the depth that alternative qualitative methodologies could potentially provide.

The chosen research methodology is aligned with and will hopefully achieve the dissertation's aims of investigating the relationship between working conditions and employee wellbeing in the post-Covid-19 hospitality industry in Dublin.

## Analysis & Findings

### Introduction

The survey questionnaire for this dissertation was conducted using Microsoft Forms, and the results were then downloaded to Microsoft Excel. Upon completion of data screening, the survey results were uploaded to SPSS for the researcher to begin initial analysis. This section will outline the primary research findings discovered and identified by the researcher as a result of the questionnaire survey employed for this dissertation. These findings will be outlined and the outcomes of the analysis's carried out will be detailed. The results of the primary statistical analysis, the between groups two-way ANOVA, as well as the post-hoc LSD test and multiple linear regression results will also be outlined.

### Validity, Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Validity refers to how accurately the research instrument measures what it claims to measure. Reliability measures the consistency and accuracy of the data to assess its level of credibility, as well as establishing the degree to which one may rely on the result (Mayers, 2013). As the survey for this dissertation uses a 4-point Likert scale, a Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) (see Appendix 5) was conducted to measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire, and to ensure the reliability of said scale. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  is measured on a scale from zero to one, with one indicating perfect consistency and homogeneity (Mayers, 2013). The questions from the survey questionnaire can be broadly divided into the variables experience, environment, and satisfaction. A Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was performed on these three variables through SPSS which produced the results below.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.891	.895	3

Table.7

Table 1 confirms that three items were included in the analysis, and that Cronbach's Alpha was .891. Values of 0.7 or above show that the scale's questions are internally valid in their

measurement (Saunders, *et al.* 2019). Therefore .891 is reasonably good considering a score of one indicates perfect reliability.

### Demographic Features

There was a total of 52 participants who completed the survey questionnaire. Of the 52, three sets of answers were deemed incomplete and were removed from the data set. Therefore, the total number of participants whose data was analysed using SPSS, was 49. A study employing quantitative methods for small-scale research projects, such those done by students at universities, should have a minimum of 50 individuals or units in the sample (Quinlan, 2011). The sample initially gathered by the researcher did involve over 50 participants, and despite three sets of answers being removed, a sample of 49 is still significantly close to 50. Of those 49 participants, 26 identified as male, 22 as female, and one participant selected the ‘other’ option. The most frequent nationalities of individuals who partook in the survey were Brazilian and Irish, with 29 participants identifying as being from Ireland, and 10 from Brazil. Table 2 below gives an overview of the other nationalities of survey questionnaire participants.

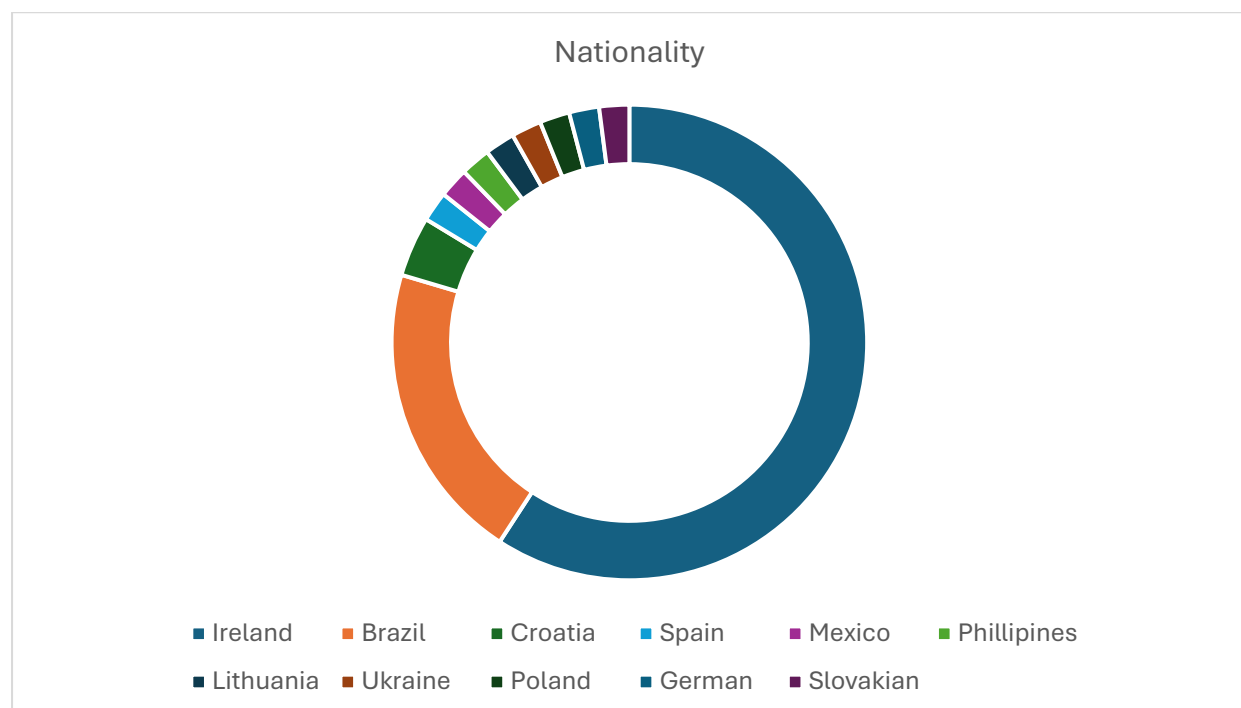


Table.8

The participants of the survey questionnaire for this dissertation were between the ages of 18 and 55 years old. The majority of participants were between the ages of 25-35, with 27



people (55.1%) falling into this category. The most frequent response to the question ‘how long have you worked in the hospitality sector?’ was 4-10 years, with the second most frequent being 1-4 years. Of the 49 participants whose data was analysed, 23 of them had between 4- and 10-years’ experience in the hospitality industry, meaning that they have worked in the sector during the Covid-19 pandemic as well as afterwards. Some of these 23 participants will have worked in hospitality for over four years and will have experienced the industry before the Covid-19 pandemic. Only three individuals had over 15 years of experience. Table 3 below gives an overview of the age and years of service figures.

	Number	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 25	16	32.7
25 – 35	27	55.1
35 - 45	5	10.2
45 - 55	1	2
<i>Total</i>	49	100
<b>Years of Service</b>		
1-4	13	26.5
4-10	23	46.9
10-15	10	20.4
15-20	1	2
20+	2	4.1
<i>Total</i>	49	100

Table.9

### Statistical Analysis

There were 62 questions in the survey questionnaire used for this research. Of those 62, 47 were considered for analysis using SPSS, due to them being answerable using a 4-point Likert scale, and can be broadly divided into three sections, satisfaction, experience, and environment. Questions which asked participants to rate or state their satisfaction with aspects of the job were grouped to the satisfaction variable. Questions relating to environmental features and conditions were grouped to the environment variable, and questions relating to the employee experience, for example, ‘Overall, how would you describe your workplace experience?’, were categorised as the experience variable.

In relation to the main research question for this dissertation, it is the relationship between working conditions and wellbeing which is of importance. In terms of the analysis relevant to this research, environment and experience are sub constructs of the term working conditions and are treated as independent variables, and the dependent variable of satisfaction is a sub

construct of wellbeing. Upon closing the survey on Microsoft Forms, each participants answers were uploaded to SPSS and divided into the respective variables of satisfaction, environment, and experience. Table 4 below offers an outline of mean, mode and median of the satisfaction, environment, and experience variables.

		Statistics		
		satisfaction	environment	experience
N	Valid	49	49	49
Mean		22.61	49.14	34.96
Median		22.00	48.00	32.00
Mode		17	40	30

Table.0

The main research question for this dissertation sought to investigate whether there is a relationship between wellbeing and post Covid-19 working conditions within the hospitality industry in Dublin. An interaction occurs when the result of one independent variable varies depending on the conditions of another independent variable, and it is possible to examine the interactions between several variables in an ANOVA with multiple factors (Forshaw, 2007). As a result of the necessity to investigate an interaction, and since there are two independent and one dependent variable involved in the research for this dissertation, it was decided to perform a two-way ANOVA, which is most commonly used where there is more than one independent variables.

### Between Groups two-way ANOVA

A between groups two-way ANOVA (see Appendix 6) was conducted to investigate the effect of satisfaction on environment and experience respectively, as well as the interaction between experience and environment. The assumption of normality was met as a precondition of the ANOVA being conducted. The data is nominal by nature, the dependent variable is continuous, and there are no significant outliers involved. An ANOVA also assumes homogeneity of variance. Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances (see Appendix 6) tests the null hypothesis that the error variances of the dependent variable are equal, with the alternative being that they would be found unequal. Based on the mean values, the p is greater than 0.05 ( $p=.428$ ). Therefore, there is no significant difference between the variances, and the null hypothesis, that the error variances of the dependent variables are equal, is accepted. As a result, a post hoc analysis assuming equal variance was conducted. Table 5 outlines ANOVA test results. The first line is looking for a significant difference

between satisfaction and environment, the second line is looking for a significant difference between experience and satisfaction, and the third line looks at the interaction between environment and experience.

#### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: satisfaction

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Environment	526.305	2	263.153	10.962	<.001
Experience	19.539	1	19.539	.814	.372
Environment * Experience	48.249	1	48.249	2.010	.163

Table.1

A significant difference will be distinguishable between variables if the P value is 0.05 or lower. The ANOVA performed showed no significant difference between satisfaction and experience ( $F(1, 44)=.814, p=.372$ ). There was no significant interaction found between environment and experience ( $F(1, 44)=2.010, p=.163$ ). There was a significant difference between satisfaction and environment found, as the P value met the criteria of 0.05 or below ( $F(2, 44)=10.962, p<.001$ ). From these results it can be concluded that there is a significant interaction between environment and satisfaction, and it can be estimated that the environmental groups of low, medium, and high respectively will have significant results relating to the satisfaction levels of the participants of this study.

#### Post-hoc Tests

Post-hoc comparison using the LSD test (see Appendix 6) performed pairwise analysis to further examine the interaction between satisfaction and environment, which was discovered in the two -way ANOVA, based on the groups low, medium, and high. The LSD test indicated that there was a significant difference in the means of low and medium ( $p=.006$ ), the confidence interval for the mean difference of which was  $[-9.4, -1.68]$ . A significant difference was also found between satisfaction levels in low and high ( $p<.001$ ), the confidence interval for the mean difference of which was  $[-21.95, -10.70]$ . Finally, a significant difference was found between satisfaction levels for medium and high ( $p<.001$ ), and the confidence interval for the mean difference was  $[-15.50, -6.07]$ . From these results it can be determined that the environmental groups of low, medium, and high respectively have

significantly different results relating to the satisfaction ranking of participants based on their positioning in one of the three environment groupings.

### Multiple Linear Regression

In using linear regressions, it can be determined the extent to which predictor or independent variables account for the variation of dependent variables (Mayers, 2013). A multiple regression (see Appendix 7) was performed to further understand the effects of sex, age, environment, and experience as independent variables on the dependent variable of satisfaction. Regression model 1 outlines how much sex accounts for the variance of satisfaction, and was not found to be statistically significant ( $F(1, 47) = .667, p = .418$ ). Model 2 includes the variables of sex and age, and was found not to be of statistical significance, ( $F(2, 46) = .737, p = .484$ ). The difference between regression model 1 and 2 is evidently quite small. However, regression model 3 includes sex and age, with the addition of environment and experience scores, and was found to be statistically significant ( $F(4, 44) = 19.975, p < .001$ ). The R value of a multiple regression acts similarly to a correlation coefficient, varying from zero to one. The prediction accuracy of the model increases the closer the value is to one. The variation created by the combination of variables inputted, is measured by the R.Square value in a regression model (Forshaw, 2007). By moving the decimal point in .645, it gives a percentage value of 64.5% prediction variance. Therefore, 64.5% of the variation of an individual's satisfaction scoring can be explained by understanding their sex, age, experience, and satisfaction scores, respectively.

### Other Findings

There were 62 questions in the survey questionnaire used for this research. Of those 62, 47 were chosen for statistical analysis using SPSS, the results of which has been outlined. Although these 47 questions have already been analysed, there are certain aspects of some individual questions within the satisfaction, environment, and experience variables which the researcher feels are important to mention. In relation to questions focusing on satisfaction, participants were asked to rate how satisfied they felt with several aspects of job and working conditions. 60% of participants were 'not at all satisfied' with their rate of pay, and 31% not very satisfied. The question 'overall, how satisfied are you with your job?' received 33%

answers for ‘not at all satisfied’ and 33% for ‘not very satisfied’. Over half of participants (66%) chosen responses which signify their dissatisfaction with their job.

In terms of the employee experience, when asked if ‘compared to before the Covid pandemic, would you say each of the following aspects has gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same?’, 41% of participants selected that their pay and compensation had ‘stayed the same’. 42% responded that communication between employees and employers has ‘gotten worse’. 76% selected ‘has stayed the same’ when asked about their relationships with coworkers. The final question of the survey questionnaire asked employees ‘how much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statement?’. The statement ‘I receive adequate non-monetary compensation for my work’ was answered 54% ‘strongly disagree’ and 23% ‘somewhat disagree’. 60% of participants selected ‘strongly disagree’ when answering ‘I feel I can reach my highest potential at my current place of work’, and 25% selected ‘somewhat disagree’. Finally, the statement ‘I am proud of my job’, received 52% responses for ‘strongly disagree’ and 12% responses for ‘somewhat disagree’. While the answers to these outlined questions have been included in the statistical analyses performed, discussing them again in this manner offers a more detailed and insightful look at the data collected, in addition to the statistics presented.

The questions chosen not to be included in the statistical analysis using SPSS was due to them not requiring answers using a 4-point Likert scale. However, these results are still considered to be of interest to this study, as they offer a more in depth understanding to both working conditions and the employee impact which cannot be gained from examining statistics in isolation. When asked ‘overall, how would you describe your workplace experience?’, 44% of participants answered ‘somewhat toxic’, and 19% ‘very toxic’. This suggests that over half of survey participants (63%) feel that they have a toxic workplace. The question ‘if you have suffered or witnessed abuse in the workplace, who was the main perpetrator?’, found that 45% of participants stated that ‘supervisors/management’ were the main offenders. 41% of participants chose ‘customers’, 8% ‘owners’, and 6% ‘coworkers’. Participants were asked to answer the question ‘do you feel you have opportunities at work to express your voice/opinions/concerns etc?’. almost half of those who answered the survey questionnaire (48%) chose ‘no’, 21% for ‘yes’, and 31%, almost a third, chose ‘sometimes’. Finally, the question ‘have you ever experienced or witnessed harassment in the workplace? (e.g. bullying, physical, verbal, sexual, racial), received 71% ‘yes’ answers, 21% ‘no’

answers, 6% 'I'm not sure', and 2% 'other'. Over two thirds of respondents answered that yes, they have experienced or witnessed harassment in the workplace.

### Limitations

The sample size of participants for this dissertation can be considered relatively small. While it is not feasible to involve every member of the population in an in-depth study, the sample gathered for this dissertation may not be fully representative of the diversity of the population of the hospitality industry in general due to its small size (Quinlan, 2011). Further on this, only three participants had over 15 years' experience in the industry, and therefore the research does lack insight from the more veteran employees of hospitality. This is possibly an area which future research could examine further by focusing on long-term employees of the industry and investigating their reasoning for remaining in the industry over time. The research instrument for this dissertation involved a quantitative analysis of survey questionnaire data. While the quantitative method is commonly used for hypothesis testing (Maksimović and Evtimov, 2023), qualitative analysis can allow for more in-depth answers to be gathered and greater insight into experience and perceptions to be understood. As the research for this dissertation was analysed quantitatively, there was less room for flexibility and explanation in the survey questionnaire responses.

Furthermore, as a survey questionnaire relies of self-reported data, there is a possibility that there may be response bias. Participants could have provided responses to questions which they believe were expected or desired (Mertler, 2016), and therefore may not have accurately answered in accordance with their true feelings and experiences. Therefore, it is possible that the participants of the survey and the answered received are not a fully accurate representation of hospitality workers currently working in the industry in Dublin. Contextual elements, such as industry trends or organisational culture, can have a significant impact on hospitality industry employees, even when it is are not immediately obvious. These factors, which have the potential to influence the link between working conditions and wellbeing, may not have been taken into consideration by the survey's scope or the questions that were asked.

## Conclusion

The research for this dissertation aimed to explore the relationship between working conditions and wellbeing in the hospitality industry in Dublin, focusing on the variables of experience and environment as sub constructs of working conditions, and satisfaction as a sub construct of wellbeing. Using a survey questionnaire employing statistical analysis through SPSS, valuable insights were gained regarding job satisfaction and the overall wellbeing of the hospitality employees who partook in the survey. The between groups two-way ANOVA performed showed that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction and environment. The post-hoc testing furthered these results by highlighting that an individual's positioning in the environmental group of low, medium, or high respectively, will have significant results relating to their satisfaction levels, with participants reporting higher satisfaction levels in more favourable working environments. The multiple linear regression performed demonstrated that variables such as sex, age, environment, and experience can collectively explain a substantial portion of the variance in job satisfaction.

Additional insights were gained through responses to questions excluded from the statistical analysis. Answers to such questions highlighted prevalent issues such as inadequate pay, communication issues, and workplace toxicity. These concerns are also evident in the previously reviewed literature of Baum *et al.* (2020), Baquero (2023), and Josiam *et al.* (2010), whose work emphasises the unfavorability of working in the hospitality industry. The findings related to this dissertation shed light on the complex and multifaceted nature of working conditions in the hospitality sector and the impact they can have on employee satisfaction and wellbeing. While the findings of the research for this dissertation will be further explored in the discussion section, it is important to emphasise that the investigation performed highlights and emphasises the significant relationship between environment and satisfaction levels, which relates more generally to the overall wellbeing of hospitality industry employees.

## Discussion

### Introduction

The investigation performed in the Findings and Analysis section highlights and emphasises the significant relationship between environment and satisfaction levels, which relates more generally to the overall wellbeing of hospitality industry employees. Additional findings outlined some of the commonplace issues within the industry, such as pay dissatisfaction and limited progression opportunities. This section will further interpret these findings and examine the implications of such. The limitations of the research performed in relation to the findings will also be outlined, and recommendations will be made for future, similar studies.

### Interpretation of Findings

The between groups two-way ANOVA that was performed showed that there was a significant relationship between satisfaction and environment, as the P value met the criteria of 0.05 or below ( $F(2, 44)=10.962, p<.001$ ). There was no significant difference between satisfaction and experience ( $F(1, 44)=.814, p=.372$ ), nor a significant interaction found between environment and experience ( $F(1, 44)=2.010, p=.163$ ). The post-hoc LSD test conducted furthered these results by confirming that the environmental groups of low, medium, and high respectively have significantly different results relating to the satisfaction levels of participants. If an individual experiences low scoring in terms of environment, they will score low for satisfaction, and vice versa if someone scores high for environment, they will have a high satisfaction score. From these results it can be concluded that an individual's workplace environment is influential in terms of satisfaction levels. This further consolidates evidence from the literature which suggests that the pessimistic working environment of the hospitality industry is negatively influencing satisfaction and wellbeing (Popa *et al.*, 2023; Wallace and Coughlin, 2022).

A multiple linear regression was performed to understand further how much the variance in satisfaction could be explained by the inclusion of certain variables in the test. Regression model 1 accounted for how much sex can explain the variance of satisfaction, and was not found to be statistically significant ( $F(1, 47)=.667, p=.418$ ). Model 2 includes the variables of sex and age, and was also found not to be statistically significant, ( $F(2, 46)=.737, p=.484$ ). Regression model 3 included sex and age, with the addition of the environment and



experience variables, and was found to be statistically significant ( $F(4, 44)=19.975, p<.001$ ). The results of regression model 3 were that 64.5% of the variation of an individual's satisfaction scoring can be explained by understanding their sex, age, experience, and satisfaction scores respectively. Regression model 3 has a significant predictive ability, and the variables that were included account for a substantial amount of the variability of satisfaction levels amongst hospitality industry employees that were surveyed. Based on these results it can be said that while satisfaction levels amongst hospitality workers are influenced by demographics, such as age and sex, it is more so the environmental factors and the workplace experience which is of greater weight. This presents satisfaction as a complex construct, the levels of which are more subjective and multifaceted than merely understanding if an individual likes or dislikes their job.

Findings outside of the statistical analyses performed highlighted the existence of issues relating to compensation and reward, workplace relationships, and culture, much of which has already been emphasised as existent by the literature reviewed for this dissertation. When asked 'overall, how satisfied are you with your job?' 33% of participants chose 'not at all satisfied', and another 33% for 'not very satisfied'. Over half of the survey participants (66%) chose responses which signify their dissatisfaction and discontent with their current job. The question 'overall, how would you describe your workplace experience?', received 44% of answers for 'somewhat toxic', and 19% for 'very toxic'. This would suggest that over half of the survey participants (63%) feel that are currently working in toxic environments of varying levels. In a more general sense, participants reported shame, dissatisfaction, and constraints in relation to career progression, relationships with management, and occupational pride. These results convey the multifaceted nature of working conditions within the industry, but also outline some of the factors which are likely to be causing dissatisfaction and frustration amongst hospitality employees.

### Research Objectives and Implications

The null hypothesis of this dissertation is that there is no relationship between post pandemic working conditions and employee wellbeing. The results of the two-way ANOVA and LSD test performed confirm that there is a significant relationship between environment and satisfaction levels, and that an individual's workplace environment is influential in relation to their satisfaction scores. From these results it is concluded that the null hypothesis can be

rejected, as there is in fact a relationship between the wellbeing of employees in the hospitality industry and current working conditions. The first research objective of this dissertation was to understand the current conditions within the hospitality industry in Dublin, examining various aspects such as the work environment, working situations, and employee circumstances. The survey questionnaire for this research asked questions regarding the working environment and conditions, satisfaction, and the employee experience, and some of the results of these questions were included as ‘Other Findings’ in the previous section. The results of the survey questionnaire highlight dissatisfaction and discontent, limitations relating to employee voice, as well as the existence of harassment and toxicity in the workplace.

While there were other, more favourable results disclosed, for example 76% of participants reporting preserved and stable relationships with coworkers, the current conditions of the industry being experienced by employees were made clear by the survey answers. Previous research has reported the vast expectation placed on hospitality employees (Singh and Loncar, 2010), unfavourable working conditions (Lugosi, 2019; Josiam *et al.*, 2010), and customer incivility (Vo-Thanh *et al.*, 2022). However, what can be considered an under researched aspect is what impact these conditions and working environment can have on employee wellbeing. The research conducted by Unite the Union (2021) as well as that of Curran (2021) focuses on the employees of the industry, and highlights issues such as regulated breaks, gender pay gaps, tips and gratuities, as well as understaffing and malpractice. While unearthing similar themes in relation to pay dissatisfaction, workplace harassment and stress, the investigation conducted by the researcher differed to that of Curran (2021) and Unite the Union (2021) in that the onus was on understanding how working conditions were affecting satisfaction levels, relating to wellbeing more generally. While previous studies have focused on identifying and emphasising the industry’s shortcomings, the investigation performed can be seen as addressing the research gap identified in the literature review, being the employee or human impact of the notably negatively working conditions. The significant relationship found between environment and satisfaction highlights how closely linked these two factors are, emphasising that working conditions and the working environment can have a human impact, being an effect of wellbeing and satisfaction.

The second research objective of this dissertation was to examine whether the negativity surrounding employee satisfaction, as emphasised in the literature review, is commonplace in the industry. Research objective 1 uncovered the current working conditions within the hospitality industry in Dublin. Issues such as dissatisfaction and discontent can be seen as negative, meaning that there is negativity present. Questions such as ‘overall, how satisfied are you with your job?’ receiving 33% answers for ‘not at all satisfied’ and 33% for ‘not very satisfied’, does indicate that over half of participants in the survey questionnaire chose responses which signify their dissatisfaction with their job. While these results do offer a negative perspective of the satisfaction levels of individuals, there were participants who scored in the high grouping in terms of satisfaction, as identified in the LSD test. Therefore, it cannot be generalised that all individuals who partook in the survey experience negative feelings and dissatisfaction relating to their working conditions in the hospitality industry.

The third and final research objective was to understand the driving factors creating this dissatisfaction if such a relationship is found to be existent. A significant relationship between environment and satisfaction was found, which can be related more generally to the overall wellbeing of hospitality employees. As previously mentioned, issues such as dissatisfaction and discontent with workplace relationships, employee experience and working conditions were identified as hugely prevalent across the answer sets received from the participants of the survey questionnaire. There were questions which asked participants to rate their satisfaction with several aspects of job and working conditions, as well as questions which asked if aspects of the job had gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same before the pandemic versus now. The results of such can be seen to identify the driving causes of dissatisfaction or discontent, for example, 60% of participants were ‘not at all satisfied’ with their rate of pay. Heimerl *et al.* (2020) maintain that interpersonal issues, poor compensation, and overload are the main causes of dissatisfaction. The significant relationship between environment and satisfaction levels found by the research performed for this dissertation emphasises the important role favourable working conditions can have in boosting employee satisfaction, as an employee’s experiences will directly impact their wellbeing and sense of fulfilment. The work environment, job satisfaction, and job security are crucial elements that support employees in achieving higher efficiency and productivity (Bala and Sharma, 2021). The results of the multiple linear regression performed provide valuable insights into the factors contributing to satisfaction among hospitality employees. By identifying the key predictors of satisfaction, hospitality employers can take proactive measures to create a

positive and supportive work environment that enhances the wellbeing and satisfaction of their employees.

When asked if compared to before the pandemic communication between employees and employers had gotten better, worse, or stayed about the same, 42% responded that communication had ‘gotten worse’. Managerial and employer support, or lack thereof, can make a huge difference when it comes to empowering employees and tackling retention issues (Popa *et al.*, 2023; Yang and Zu 2023). By understanding how working conditions effect employees, greater attention can be given by employers to offering enhanced support to individuals working in these difficult environments. Communication between employees and employers is vital if grievances are to be expressed, but also if they are to be addressed and resolved accordingly. Creating a more positive working environment can take time, but fostering more unified relations between employees and employers through open communication can be a step in the right direction.

The research and writing of Baum *et al.* (2020; Baum, 2019) and Curran (2021) has been seminal to the work undertaken for this dissertation, and a lot of what they reported has appeared in this research. The writing of Baum *et al.* (2020) emphasises the idea that hospitality suffers high turnover and retention issues due to the undesirable characteristics of the industry, and without meaningful change there will be no difference. The writing of O’Leary and Deegan (2005), Josiam *et al.* (2010) and Putra *et al.* (2017) all emphasises a similar point, that the challenges facing the industry are persistent, and can be seen as causal to the industry’s negative reputation. The research conducted for this dissertation after the Covid-19 pandemic identifies similar undesirable features of the industry, which can be seen to signify that hospitality is still struggling with the same long-standing issues. The significance of this research being performed after the pandemic is the reemphasis that despite the rebuilding of the sector after Covid-19, the difficult and undesirable working conditions persistently remain. While attention and focus were given to the economic recovery of the sector after the pandemic, there is still a way to go in the restoration of the employee experience. It is only with acknowledgement and awareness of these issues can employers begin to foster better practices and create a more appropriate environment for their employees.

### Research Limitations and Recommendations for Future Studies

As the research performed was quantitative rather than qualitative, there was a limit on how much information could be gained from the survey questionnaire answers. Conducting a survey questionnaire with an option for engagement in a follow-up interview could offer a more in-depth perspective of the hospitality industry, as participants are given the opportunity to voice opinions and thoughts which may not come across from survey answers. The sample size of participants for this dissertation can be considered relatively small. Therefore, this may not be fully representative of the diversity of the population of the hospitality industry in general, however there were time constraints related to this dissertation. If future research were to be conducted, additional support could be utilised to access more potential participants at a greater pace.

Apprehension related to completing the survey can be seen as a possible limitation of the sample size gathered for this research. Despite there being an emphasis on anonymity and confidentiality, there is of course the possibility that individuals who did receive the survey questionnaire chose not to participate due to the anticipation of negative consequences. However, this is a circumstance which unfortunately cannot be mitigated. Furthermore, given the diversity of the hospitality industry, English may not have been the first language of several potential participants who received the survey, and in turn the idea of completing it may have been intimidating.

If a similar study were to be conducted in the future, an investigation of emotional labour in the hospitality industry could be relevant to employee satisfaction. Elshaer *et al.* (2022) and Vashdi *et al.* (2022) emphasise the necessity of employing coping mechanisms to deal with the adversity and pressure of working in hospitality. The impact this type of masking has on employee wellbeing could be a potential future area of research, as the performative nature of customer service roles can be challenging and frustrating for employees (Vo-Thanh *et al.*, 2022). The research for this dissertation uncovered many areas where employees reported dissatisfaction. Based on these findings, potential case study research could be performed in hospitality businesses where changes have been implemented in relation to employee feedback or newfound industry trends.

## Conclusion

The discussion section has provided an overview of the findings related to this dissertation and the implications of such in relation to the hospitality industry more generally. The two-way ANOVA that was performed revealed a significant relationship between environment and satisfaction, and based on the results of the multiple linear regression it can be said that satisfaction levels amongst hospitality workers are influenced by demographic as well as environmental factors and the workplace experience. These findings complement existing literature which emphasises the intricacy and intensity of the hospitality working environment (Baum *et al.*, 2020; Lugosi, 2019; Josiam *et al.*, 2010). The significant relationship the research conducted found between environment and satisfaction, highlights the importance of positive working environments in maintaining employee satisfaction. The knowledge gained from statistical analysis, as well as the additional findings from other survey questions, offers insight to potentially some of the reasonings why participants are not currently satisfied in their workplace, and will have scored low on the satisfaction levels. Much of what is discovered from these participant answers can be seen in the literature reviewed, and further emphasises that despite awareness of these undesirable working conditions, they are still existent and commonplace.

The discussion section has not only highlighted the prevailing issues plaguing the hospitality industry, but also outlined potential avenues for future research. Recommendations for future studies include exploring the effects of emotional labour on employee wellbeing in the hospitality industry, as well as conducting case studies on businesses implementing changes based on employee feedback. By acknowledging the multifaceted nature of the relationship between working conditions, satisfaction and wellbeing, employers and stakeholders and in hospitality can work towards creating a more supportive and fulfilling work environment for employees, which in turn may begin to ease the turnover, retention and reputation issues facing the industry.

## Dissertation Conclusion and Future Recommendations

The onset of government mandated restrictions and lockdowns in March of 2020 brought significant changes to the landscape of hospitality in Ireland. In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, the already flawed industry was faced with the emergence of work-life balance, wellbeing and job satisfaction being at the fore of employee's priorities. If hospitality is to recover and flourish after the pandemic, a deeper awareness of the challenges employees are faced with in the workplace, and an understanding of the potential effects this may have on their wellbeing, is first required. Prior to conducting initial analysis, the effect which working conditions are having on employee wellbeing within hospitality was considered as an underdeveloped aspect of industry research. Much of the literature reviewed mentioned the notably negative persona of the industry (Baum, 2019; Josiam *et al.*, 2010; O'Leary and Deegan, 2005), however, there was seen to be a disconnect between cause and effect. The research relating to this dissertation sought to close this gap, to greater understand the relationship between working conditions and employee wellbeing within the hospitality industry in Dublin, with the overarching research question being, 'How are the post Covid-19 working conditions effecting employee wellbeing within the hospitality industry in Dublin?'. A mono method quantitative analysis was performed using data gathered through an online questionnaire survey with a cross sectional time horizon. The data was then analysed using SPSS, the results of which have been outlined in previous sections.

A significant relationship was found to exist between environment and satisfaction levels, and this can be related more generally to the overall wellbeing of hospitality industry employees. This finding can also be linked back to the reviewed literature, which asserts the impact of negative working environments on employee wellbeing (Popa *et al.*, 2023; Wallace and Coughlin, 2022). This identified relationship not only reaffirms the findings of the literature, but also compliments previous studies conducted by Curran (2021) and Unite the Union (2021) in highlighting the enduring nature of this negativity surrounding industry conditions. The importance of positive working environments in preserving and maintaining employee's satisfaction is obvious. If employees are unsatisfied and surrounded by negativity, they will either engage in counterproductive and withdrawal behaviour or resign and add to the already evident turnover issues. The findings of this dissertation also raise another issue of importance, being that very little has changed. Previous research has long reported on unfavourable working conditions (Lugosi, 2019; Josiam *et al.*, 2010), as well as the

overworking and underpaying nature of the industry (Baum *et al.*, 2020; Josiam *et al.*, 2010; Singh and Loncar, 2010). The research performed for this dissertation shows the same themes of pay dissatisfaction, poor working conditions, and pressurised, stressful environments, leading to suggest that the industry may have a long way to go in transforming its negative reputation.

While this study has provided valuable insights, it is not without its limitations. The quantitative nature of the research design, along with the relatively small sample size, constrains the depth of understanding that could have been achieved. A quantitative survey can only gain so much insight from participants as there is little room for individual thought and idea when the response options are predetermined. With this in mind, future studies may benefit from integrating qualitative methodologies, for example including the opportunity to participate in a follow-up interview, as this can provide a deeper understanding of the hospitality employees perspective. The post-hoc LSD test performed pairwise analysis to further examine the interaction between satisfaction and environment, which was discovered in the two-way ANOVA, based on the groups low, medium, and high. The results of this test highlighted that an individual's positioning in the environmental group of low, medium, or high respectively, will have significant results relating to their satisfaction levels. Another possible angle could be for those follow-up interviews to be conducted with participants who scored particularly low and those ranking very high, to allow for cross comparison and contrasting. There are practical challenges related to obtaining a representative sample from the vast hospitality industry in Dublin for a dissertation of this nature, including time constraints and resource limitations. If this study was repeated, or a similar study were to be performed in the future, engagement with individual hospitality businesses and owners in allowing access to their employees for survey distribution could allow for a greater response rate and therefore a more vibrant data set.

Due to the deductive nature of the research performed, it is possible to examine the participant responses obtained from the questionnaire survey to provide definitive findings for the testable hypotheses and research objectives. The statistical analysis performed as part of this dissertation highlights and emphasises the significant relationship between environment and satisfaction levels, which relates more generally to the overall wellbeing of hospitality industry employees. Based on this finding the null hypothesis, that there is no relationship between post pandemic working conditions and employee wellbeing, was rejected, and the alternative, that there is a relationship between post Covid-19 pandemic



working conditions and employee wellbeing, is accepted. The first research objective, to understand the current conditions within the hospitality industry in Dublin, was met by the research conducted as the findings showed widespread dissatisfaction and workplace issues, such as harassment and toxicity. The second objective was to examine whether the negativity surrounding employee satisfaction, as emphasised in the literature review, is commonplace in the industry. While many survey participants expressed dissatisfaction, not all did. This suggests some variety in the experience of hospitality employees, and therefore it cannot be generalised that all participants involved in the survey experience negative emotions and dissatisfaction relating to their working conditions in the industry. The third and final research objective sought to understand the driving factors creating dissatisfaction if negativity was found to be existent. Based on the participant responses, issues including relationships at work, employee experiences, and working circumstances can be seen to be some of the drivers of dissatisfaction and pessimism amongst the individuals surveyed. The findings of the research conducted for this dissertation not only allow for the rejection of the null hypothesis, but also meet the research objectives which were set at the outset. The findings have revealed the current conditions within the Dublin hospitality industry, conveying the existence of negative feelings amongst employees, and allowed for the identification of several possible key drivers of dissatisfaction.

### Future Recommendations

The findings of this research have not only confirmed the existence of widespread discontent but offers insight to some of the potential reasonings why participants are not currently satisfied in their workplace, highlighting the prevailing issues plaguing the hospitality industry. However, this has also outlined and charted potential avenues for future research and industry advancement. These findings stress the complex challenges facing industry employees, emphasising the pressing need for large scale interventions that address these fundamental issues, the most pressing of which being employee dissatisfaction and discontent, both of which can negatively impact wellbeing. In understanding how employees perceive the hospitality working environment, and by using this knowledge, businesses and employers may make improvements and adjustments, instead of accepting negativity and low work satisfaction as the standard for the industry.

One clear recommendation to employers and stakeholders would be to prioritise the wellbeing of their employees by actively addressing some of the commonplace issues identified in this research. In order to facilitate the continued prosperity of hospitality businesses, it is imperative that employers understand the value of their employees. Reward, both financial and non-financial, can be hugely incentivizing to employees. In order to promote collaboration and communication, each individual's contribution must be rewarded and acknowledged (Taylor, 2018). While it is pleasant to receive generous compensation for work done, non-financial rewards, such as employee award initiatives or staff discounts, can also be attractive. Enhancing reward offerings can increase costs for the employer, for example in relation to employee discounts, but the improvement this can bring to morale and loyalty may be priceless. Low unemployment rates and tight labour markets for skilled workers have made it difficult to hire 'ready-made' workers in a timely manner (The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation, 2024). As a result, training and development initiatives can be seen as a worthwhile investment for employers as well as employees. While this may involve immediate expenses in relation to the development of training programmes, it can lead to long-term benefits for the employer if their employees are both confident and competent. Developing home grown talent is of huge importance to the hospitality industry, as there may not be the option to buy it in ready-made (Taylor and Perkins, 2021). In addition, an employer who is willing to invest in employee development can be attractive to both potential recruits, and aid in the retention of current employees.

In terms of timescales and priorities, immediate action should be taken, but the long-term vision will take time to materialise. In the short-term, beginning with open communication, whereby both employees and their employer can find common ground and agree on key issues, can allow for the beginning of the creation of a supportive and conducive working environment. Initial communication can allow for discussion surrounding new initiatives and implementation timeframes, in an effort to ensure all parties involved are in agreement going forward. While the long-term goal may be to boost job satisfaction, improve working conditions, or focus on employee wellbeing, immediate changes in the short term can be a step in the right direction. Employer efforts to improve job satisfaction and working conditions can have a positive impact on employee experience, but also for the business in terms of enhanced retention, greater productivity, and the overall success of their business. Ultimately, the hope with any changes or initiatives which are implemented should be to

create an environment where employees can thrive and flourish, which in turn can only be beneficial for the employer and the enterprise in the long run.

The research conducted for this dissertation has shed light on the intricate relationship between working conditions and employee wellbeing within the hospitality industry in Dublin. The related findings have highlighted the multifaceted nature of the important relationship between working conditions, satisfaction, and wellbeing. It is only with understanding and awareness of this relationship can employers and stakeholders in the hospitality industry begin to work towards the creation of a more supportive and fulfilling work environment for employees, which in turn will oversee the resilience and adaptability of the hospitality industry in the face of future adversity.

## **Personal Learning Statement**

Before completing this dissertation, I already had an awareness of the reality of working in hospitality in Dublin. Having worked in the industry for over six years, I have first hand experienced the service environment before, during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Hospitality is a pressurised and highly stressful environment, where the vast majority of employees are underappreciated and underpaid. My motivation in choosing this research area for my dissertation was based on my own personal experiences, but also on a desire to bring greater awareness to the current situations in the industry. I do believe that greater awareness of the realities of working in hospitality is needed if there is to be reform, and if this dissertation can act as even a conversation starter between participants and their employers then I feel I have achieved something.

Having no previous experience in completing a thesis or dissertation at college level, taking part in this research has allowed me to utilise my time management skills, organisational skills, and attention to detail. If I was to undertake further hospitality research in the future, I think performing case study research on hospitality businesses where changes have been implemented in relation to employee feedback or newfound industry trends would provide huge insight into how positive change is possible. The research performed for this dissertation was quantitative, and therefore there was a limit on how much information could be gained from the survey answers of participants. Conducting a survey questionnaire with an option for engagement in a follow-up interview would offer a more in-depth perspective of the hospitality industry, and I think this combination of survey and interview data would offering a more compelling set of results if future similar research were to be conducted.

Hospitality is a hotbed of human resources (HR) processes, and a lot of the most pressing HR challenges today, for example retention, talent development, and change management are of paramount importance to the survival of the industry. From working in hospitality, I am no stranger to the negativity and preconceptions surrounding the industry, however despite its shortcomings there are perks to working in service, and it is hoped that with greater change management, these positives can multiply tenfold.

## Reference List

- Adams, J., Khan, H.T.A., Raeside, R. and White, D. (2007) *Research methods for graduate business and social science students*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Adams, J.S. (1963) 'Toward and understanding of inequity', *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67(5), pp. 422-436, APA PsychNet. doi: [10.1037/h0040968](https://doi.org/10.1037/h0040968).
- Allied Irish Banks. (2019) *Hospitality and tourism report 2019*. Available at: <https://aib.ie/business/sector-expertise/sector-reports> [Accessed 30 January 2024].
- American Psychological Association (2022) *Work and well-being survey*. Available at: <https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/work-well-being/2022-survey-questions.pdf> [Accessed 20 December 2023].
- Armstrong, M. (2012). *Armstrong's Handbook of Management and Leadership: Developing Effective People Skills for Better Leadership and Management*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. London: Kogan Page.
- Bala, R. and Sharma, T. (2021) 'A study on quality of work life in the hospitality industry employees', *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(8), pp. 14364–14375. Available at: <https://discovery.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=7da5d302-0cf0-3a91-aa2f-276ebfef8751> [Accessed 13 March 2024].
- Balnaves, M. and Caputi, P. (2001) *Introduction to Quantitative Research Methods*. SAGE Publications. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849209380> [Accessed 7 March 2024].
- Baquero, A. (2023) 'Hotel employees' burnout and intention to quit: the role of psychological distress and financial well-being in a moderation mediation model', *Behavioural Sciences*, 13(2), MDPI. doi: 10.3390/bs13020084.
- Barbhuiya, M.R. and Chatterjee, D. (2022) 'Just survive or thrive? Effect of psychological and organisational resilience on adoption of innovative strategies by hospitality sector post Covid-19', *Tourism Planning and Development*, pp. 188-221, Taylor & Francis Online. doi: 10.1080/21568316.2022.212312.
- Baum, T., Mooney, S.K.K., Robinson, R.N.S. and Solnet, D. (2020) 'Covid-19's impact on the hospitality workforce – new crisis or amplification of the norm?', *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 32(9), pp. 2813-2829, Emerald. doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-04-2020-0314.
- Baum, T. (2019) 'Hospitality employment 2033: A back casting perspective', *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 76(B), pp. 45-52, Elsevier. doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2018.06.027.

Bell, R.L., 2011. 'Addressing employees' feelings of inequity: Capitalizing on equity theory in modern management', *Supervision*, 72(5), pp.3-6, Google Scholar. Available at: [https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/42805260/addressing\\_employees\\_feelings\\_of\\_inequi20160218-18129-130lq7w-libre.pdf?1455810143=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DAddressing\\_Employees\\_Feelings\\_of\\_Inequit.pdf&Expires=1711127793&Signature=KuZVR78Cc5qLrSAPV8jq7VFTpGro93qkcprlR5nCs7pZ6XT1vRfpZAVeA~bilhiAlkGQ1a818J1nW7pqOQt4LGIgqRWKQsJb9EW3Ty70Is~Krm9osV~SG~ZUXvwxffJns9ybJp-0Xv3uXI0c~7mtF-6WSIzKtydluuZV50QvkEHPYAvCedIxOgG47chwJPWQO4a3zPU9OYQHhrGewvuld5MiaJ2CPPv1ZRshxmBvWGhRjP~F23yPjXwDOA4SVW5yGBhf6OKZ7Uqvs~-MnqslZXVahncWGDgDYtjIydS9u7mZtgfQwpRkmuu8JggPCJ99bvYiZfDtE~-KIHNW-R9Zg\\_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA](https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/42805260/addressing_employees_feelings_of_inequi20160218-18129-130lq7w-libre.pdf?1455810143=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DAddressing_Employees_Feelings_of_Inequit.pdf&Expires=1711127793&Signature=KuZVR78Cc5qLrSAPV8jq7VFTpGro93qkcprlR5nCs7pZ6XT1vRfpZAVeA~bilhiAlkGQ1a818J1nW7pqOQt4LGIgqRWKQsJb9EW3Ty70Is~Krm9osV~SG~ZUXvwxffJns9ybJp-0Xv3uXI0c~7mtF-6WSIzKtydluuZV50QvkEHPYAvCedIxOgG47chwJPWQO4a3zPU9OYQHhrGewvuld5MiaJ2CPPv1ZRshxmBvWGhRjP~F23yPjXwDOA4SVW5yGBhf6OKZ7Uqvs~-MnqslZXVahncWGDgDYtjIydS9u7mZtgfQwpRkmuu8JggPCJ99bvYiZfDtE~-KIHNW-R9Zg_&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA) [Accessed 10 January 2024].

Biggam, J. (2021) *Succeeding with your Master's Dissertation: a Step-by-Step Handbook*. 5<sup>th</sup> edn. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Booyens, I., Hadjisolomou, A., Nickson, D., Cunningham, T. and Baum, T. (2022) 'It's not a big deal': customer misbehaviour and social washing in hospitality', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 34(11), pp. 4123-4141, Emerald. doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-10-2021-1310.

Boukis, A. (2016) 'Achieving favourable customer outcomes through employee deviance', *The Service Industries Journal*, 36(7-8), pp. 319 - 338, Taylor & Francis Online. doi: [10.1080/02642069.2016.1219722](https://doi.org/10.1080/02642069.2016.1219722).

Chen, C.T., Hu, H.H. and King, B. (2018) 'Shaping the organisational citizenship behaviour or workplace deviance: key determining factors in the hospitality workforce', *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 35, pp. 1-8, ELSEVIER. doi: 10.1016/j.jhtm.2018.01.003.

Crotty, D. (2023) *How can Ireland's hospitality sector remain resilient*. Available at: [https://www.ey.com/en\\_ie/strategy-transactions/how-can-ireland-s-hospitality-sector-remain-resilient](https://www.ey.com/en_ie/strategy-transactions/how-can-ireland-s-hospitality-sector-remain-resilient) [Accessed April 10 2024].

Curran, D. (2021) *Inside out hospitality: a study of working conditions in the hospitality sector in Ireland*. doi: <https://doi.org/10.13025/EVCK-0X89>.

De Castro, A.B., Agnew, J. and Fitzgerald, S.T. (2004) 'Emotional labour: relevant theory for occupational health practice in post-industrial America', *AAOHN Journal*, 52(3), pp. 109-115, PubMed. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/15068101/> [Accessed 22 February 2024].

Deloitte (2022) *Hospitality and tourism sector: Domestic market review*. Available at: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/ie/Documents/Finance/Hospitality-Tourism-Sector-Domestic-Market-Review.pdf> [Accessed 14 February 2024].

Elshaer, I.A., Azazz A.M.S. and Fayyad, S. (2022) 'Positive humor and work withdrawal behaviors: the role of stress coping styles in the hotel industry amid covid-19 pandemic', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(6233), pp. 1-12, MDPI Open Access Journals. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19106233>.

Fáilte Ireland (2018) *Tourism Facts 2017*. Available at: [https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3\\_Research\\_Insights/5\\_International\\_Tourism\\_Trends/Tourism-Facts-2017\\_1.pdf?ext=.pdf](https://www.failteireland.ie/FailteIreland/media/WebsiteStructure/Documents/3_Research_Insights/5_International_Tourism_Trends/Tourism-Facts-2017_1.pdf?ext=.pdf) [Accessed 22 January 2024].

Fáilte Ireland (2019) *Key Tourism Facts 2018*. Available at: [Key Tourism Facts 2018 JULY 2019. REVISED DECEMBER 2019 \(failteireland.ie\)](#) [Accessed 22 January 2024].

Forshaw, M. (2007) *Easy Statistics in Psychology: A BPS Guide*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Gov.ie (2020) *Government publishes roadmap to ease COVID-19 restrictions and reopen Ireland's society and economy*. Available at: <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/e5e599-government-publishes-roadmap-to-ease-covid-19-restrictions-and-reopen/#:~:text=The%20roadmap%20will%20start%20from,restrictions%2C%20at%20three%20week%20intervals> [Accessed 14 February 2024].

Healy, A. (2021) 'Hospitality needs to 'rethink' how they attract workers', *The Irish Examiner*, 26 October. Available at: <https://www.irishexaminer.com/business/economy/arid-40729794.html> [Accessed 10 April 2024].

Heimerl, P., Haid, M., Benedikt, L. and Scholl-Grissemann, U. (2020) 'Factors influencing job satisfaction in hospitality industry', *SAGE Open*, 10(4), pp. 1-12, SAGE Journals. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020982998>.

Hochschild, A.R. (1983). *The managed heart: Commercialization of human feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

The Irish Tourism Industry Confederation (2024) *Analysis of government induced costs on tourism & hospitality enterprises*. Available at: [https://www.itic.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Analysis\\_of\\_Government\\_induced\\_costs\\_on\\_tourism\\_enterprises\\_Jim-Power\\_ITIC\\_March2024.pdf](https://www.itic.ie/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Analysis_of_Government_induced_costs_on_tourism_enterprises_Jim-Power_ITIC_March2024.pdf) [Accessed 10 April 2024].

Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media (2022) 'Working Conditions and Skills Shortages in Ireland's Tourism and Hospitality Sector'. Dublin: House of the

Oireachtas. Available at:

[https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_tourism\\_culture\\_arts\\_sport\\_and\\_media/reports/2022/2022-11-15\\_report-on-working-conditions-and-skills-shortages-in-ireland-s-tourism-and-hospitality-sector\\_en.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint_committee_on_tourism_culture_arts_sport_and_media/reports/2022/2022-11-15_report-on-working-conditions-and-skills-shortages-in-ireland-s-tourism-and-hospitality-sector_en.pdf) [Accessed 20 January 2024].

Joint Committee on Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport and Media (2021) 'Report on the impact of Covid-19 on the hospitality and entertainment sectors'. Dublin: House of the Oireachtas.

Available at:

[https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint\\_committee\\_on\\_tourism\\_culture\\_arts\\_sport\\_and\\_media/reports/2021/2021-07-21\\_report-on-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-hospitality-and-entertainment-sectors\\_en.pdf](https://data.oireachtas.ie/ie/oireachtas/committee/dail/33/joint_committee_on_tourism_culture_arts_sport_and_media/reports/2021/2021-07-21_report-on-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-the-hospitality-and-entertainment-sectors_en.pdf) [Accessed 15 February 2024].

Josiam, B.M., Devine, F.G., Baum, T., Crutsinger, C. and Reynolds, (2010) 'Attitudes to work of generation Y students in hospitality management: a comparative analysis of students in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland', *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education*, 22(1), pp. 44-53, Taylor and Francis. Doi: 10.1080/10963758.2010.10696968.

Liu-Lastres, B., Karatepe, O.M. and Okumus, F. (2024) 'Combatting quiet quitting: implications for future research and practices for talent management', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 36(1), pp. 13-24, Emerald. doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-08-2023-1317.

Liu-Lastres, B., Huang, W. and Bao, H. (2023) 'Exploring hospitality workers' career choices in the wake of covid-19: insights from a phenomenological inquiry', *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 111, pp. 1-11, ELSEVIER. doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2023.103485.

Lugosi, P. (2019). 'Deviance, deviant behaviour and hospitality management: sources, forms and drivers', *Tourism Management*, 74, pp. 81- 98. APA PsychNet. Doi: [/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.02.014](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.02.014).

Maksimović, J. and Evtimov, J. (2023) 'Positivism and post-positivism as the basis of quantitative research in pedagogy', *Research in Pedagogy*, 13(1), pp. 208-218, Semantic Scholar. doi: 10.5937/IstrPed2301208M.

Mansfield, L., Daykin, N. and Kay, T. (2020) 'Leisure and wellbeing', *Leisure Studies*, 39(1), pp. 1-10, Taylor & Francis Online. doi: [10.1080/02614367.2020.1713195](https://doi.org/10.1080/02614367.2020.1713195).

Mayers, A. (2013) *Introduction to Statistics and SPSS in Psychology*. Harlow: Pearson.

Mertler, C.A. (2016) *Introduction to educational research*. California: SAGE Publications.

Nagar, P. and Mathur, P. (2023) 'Impact of the covid-19 pandemic in the hospitality industry - job insecurity', *Journal of Hospitality Application & Research*, 18(1), pp. 114–125. Available



at: <https://discovery.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=f5294635-ac04-39e5-b488-260f28045f8b> [Accessed 10 January 2024].

O'Leary, S. and Deegan, J. (2005) 'Career progression of Irish tourism and hospitality management graduates', *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 17(5), pp. 421-432, Emerald. doi: 10.1108/09596110510604841.

Pandey, T. and Chauhan, A.S. (2021) 'Effect of job fulfilment over employee performance execution at the workplace: a study based on identifying the significance of demographical characteristics', *International Journal of Asian Business and Information Management*, 12(2), pp. 37-53, EBSCOhost. Doi: 10.4018/IJABIM.20210401.0a3.

Popa, J., Lee, L., Yu, H. and Madera, J.M. (2023) 'Losing talent due to covid-19: the roles of anger and fear on industry turnover intentions', *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 54, pp. 119-127, ELSEVIER. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2022.12.010>.

Power, J. (2020) *A plan to stabilise and re-build the Irish restaurant sector*. Available at: <https://www.rai.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/A-PLAN-TO-STABILISE-AND-RE-BUILD-THE-IRISH-RESTAURANT-SECTOR-JUNE-2020.pdf> [Accessed 12 March 2024].

Putra, E.D., Cho, S. and Liu, J. (2017) 'Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation on work engagement in the hospitality industry: test of motivation crowding theory', *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 17(2), pp. 228-241, SAGE Publications. doi: 10.1177/1467358415613393.

Quinlan, C. (2011) *Business Research Methods*. Boston: Cengage Learning.

Saunders, M., Lewis, S. and Thornhill, A. (2019) *Research methods for business students*. 8<sup>th</sup> edn. VLeBooks. Available at: <https://discovery.ebsco.com/linkprocessor/plink?id=6319ee6a-54cc-3fc1-b588-bea575c860c8> [Accessed 17 January 2024].

Shum, C., Garlington, J., Ghosh, A. and Baloglu, S. (2021) 'A content analysis of hospitality research's research methods in the 2010s', *International Hospitality Review*, 37(2), pp. 286-313, Emerald. doi: 10.1108/IHR-03-2021-002.

Singh, P. and Loncar, N. (2010) 'Pay satisfaction, job satisfaction and turnover intent', *Industrial Relations*, 65(3), pp. 470-490, JSTOR. Available at: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23078304> [Accessed 15 February 2024].

Taylor, S. and Perkins, G. (2021) *Work and employment in a changing business context*. ProQuest Ebook Central. Available at: <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ncirlie/reader.action?docID=6631716&query=flexible+working+covid+human+resource+management#> [Accessed 10 March 2024].

Taylor, S. (2021) *Resourcing and talent management*. 8<sup>th</sup> edn. London: Kogan Page.

Unite the Union (2021) *Hidden truths – the reality of work in Ireland’s hospitality and tourism sector before and during Covid-19*. Available at:  
<https://unitetheunionireland.files.wordpress.com/2021/07/hidden-truths-hospitality-survey.pdf>  
[Accessed 20 December 2023].

Vashdi, D.R., Katz-Navon, T. and Delegach, M. (2022) ‘Service priority climate and service performance among hospitality employees: the role of emotional labour and workload pressure’, *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 63(4), pp. 504-518, SAGE. doi: 10.1177/19389655211029912.

Vo-Thanh, T., Nguyen, N.P., Thi Ngo, L.P., Vu, T.V., Nguyen, D.V. and Sueur, I. (2022) ‘Handling counterproductive behaviour caused by customer misbehaviour during a pandemic: integrating personal and organisational perspectives’, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 107, ELSEVIER. doi: 10.1016/j.ijhm.2022.103335.

Voorhees, C.M., Fombelle, P.W. and Bone, S.A. (2020), ‘Don’t forget about the frontline employee during the COVID-19 pandemic: preliminary insights and a research agenda on market shocks’, *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 23 No. 4, pp. 396-400, SAGE Journals. doi: 10.1177/1094670520944606.

Wallace, E. and Coughlan, J. (2023) ‘Burnout and counterproductive workplace behaviours among frontline hospitality employees: The effect of perceived contract precarity’, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 35(2), pp. 451-468, Emerald Publishing Limited. doi: 10.1108/IJCHM-02-2022-0195.

Woiceshyn, J. and Daellenbach, U.S. (2018) ‘Evaluating inductive versus deductive research in management studies: implications for authors, editors, and reviewers’, *Qualitative Research in Organisations and Management*, 13(2), Emerald Publishing Limited. doi: 10.1108/QROM-06-2017-1538.

Yang, W. and Zu, S. (2023) ‘Should we be more mindful? The joint impact of an abusive work environment and mindfulness on employee well-being and turnover intentions’, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research*, pp. 1-13, SAGE. doi: 10.1177/10963480231156832.

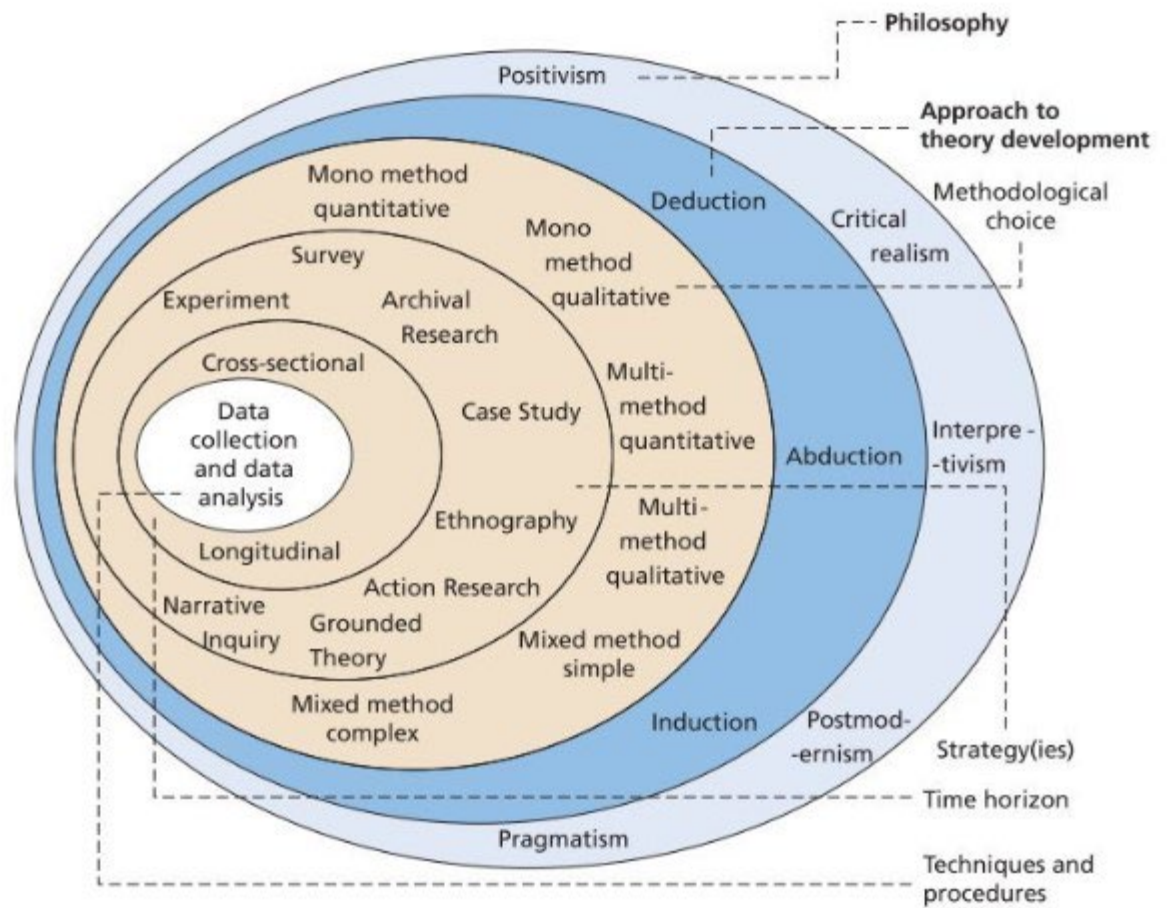
Yu, H., Lee, L., Popa, J. and Madera, J.M. (2021) ‘Should I leave this industry? The role of stress and negative emotions in response to an industry negative work event’, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 94, pp. 1-11, ELSEVIER. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhm.2020.102843>.

Zhao, X., Qu, H. and Liu, J. (2014) ‘An investigation into the relationship between hospitality employees’ work-family conflicts and their leisure intentions’, *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, 55(4), pp. 408-421, SAGE publications. Doi: 10.1177/193896551351.

Zhenjing, G., Chupradit, S., Yen Ku, K., Nassani, A.A. and Haffar, M. (2022) 'Impact of employees' workplace environment on employees' performance: a multi-mediation model', *Frontiers in Public Health*, 10(890400), Frontiers. Doi: doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2022.890400.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – The ‘Research Onion’



The ‘Research Onion’ (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

## Appendix 2 – Information Sheet

### **Information Sheet**

The Covid-19 pandemic and aftermath brought an abundance of challenges to the hospitality industry. This research seeks to understand the effect which post Covid-19 working conditions are having on employee wellbeing within the hospitality industry in Dublin. The results of this survey will contribute towards my dissertation for a [Masters in Human Resource Management](#).

You have been invited to participate in this research as an individual who has worked in the industry over the course of the pandemic and afterwards. The questions in this survey cover many issues relating to working conditions, for example workload, working patterns, compensation, employee benefits, workplace relations, etc.

In line with NCI's ethical guidelines and procedures for research involving human participants, data, including all forms of primary research materials, must be recorded or retained in a durable and appropriately referenced form and held for a period of at least five years to protect the researcher and the College in case of an allegation of falsification of data.

You are free to decide if you wish to partake or [not](#) and can change your mind at any time if you wish to withdraw your answers from the collected information. [All of](#) your answers will remain anonymous and confidential.

If there is anything which seems unclear, or you are unsure of please feel free to contact me by emailing [x21174407@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:x21174407@student.ncirl.ie).

I really appreciate you taking the time to fill in this survey, and please feel free to share it with friends or other coworkers who may also be eligible to partake. Thank you!

## Appendix 3 – Consent Forms

### **Consent Form**

Please fill out this consent form before continuing to the survey questions.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet about this study. \*

- ☐ I confirm
- ☐ I do not confirm

2. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and I am free to change my mind at any time. \*

- ☐ I understand
- ☐ I do not understand

3. I understand that the data collected about me during this study will be anonymous and not identifiable when the research is published. \*

- ☐ I understand
- ☐ I do not understand

4. I am over 18 years of age. \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. I agree to take part in this survey. \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

### **Confirmation of Consent for Data Usage**

Please select one of the following options

24. Having completed this survey: \*

- ☐ I consent to the researcher using my answers in their research
- ☐ I do not consent to my answers being used in research

## Appendix 4 – Debriefing Information

### **Debriefing Information**

This survey was designed to gain greater understanding into the employee experience of the hospitality industry post covid, and how the working conditions are impacting wellbeing. Employee wellbeing concerns the working environment and experience, as well as the employee's attitudes and needs. Much of the previous research in this area has identified working conditions within the industry, but not often from the perspective of how these issues are effecting employees.

#### **Withdrawal information**

If you have any questions about this study, or if you would like to withdraw your data from the study, please contact the researcher at [x21174407@student.ncirl.ie](mailto:x21174407@student.ncirl.ie). In your email, please provide your unique ID code, the first letter of your surname, and last letter of your first name, followed by the two digits ending your phone number. If you submit a request for data removal, all data collected from you will be securely deleted.

Again, thank you so much for taking the time to complete this survey, it is really appreciated.

---

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Microsoft. The data you submit will be sent to the form owner.

 Microsoft Forms

## Appendix 5 – Cronbach's Alpha

### Scale: ALL VARIABLES

#### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	49	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	49	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

#### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.891	.895	3

#### Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	satisfaction	experience	environment
satisfaction	1.000	.767	.717
experience	.767	1.000	.733
environment	.717	.733	1.000

#### Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
satisfaction	84.10	196.885	.796	.640	.844
experience	71.76	176.647	.807	.657	.826
environment	57.57	165.583	.772	.596	.865

#### Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
106.71	383.417	19.581	3



## Appendix 6 – Between Groups Two-Way ANOVA

### Univariate Analysis of Variance

#### Between-Subjects Factors

N		
envirogroup	1	8
	2	36
	3	5
experigrpoup2	1	42
	2	7

#### Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances<sup>a,b</sup>

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
satisfaction	Based on Mean	.981	4	44	.428
	Based on Median	.966	4	44	.436
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.966	4	41.113	.436
	Based on trimmed mean	.981	4	44	.428

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Dependent variable: satisfaction

b. Design: Intercept + envirogroup + experigrpoup2 + envirogroup \* experigrpoup2

#### Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: satisfaction

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	955.341 <sup>a</sup>	4	238.835	9.949	<.001
Intercept	13752.479	1	13752.479	572.862	<.001
envirogroup	526.305	2	263.153	10.962	<.001
experigrpoup2	19.539	1	19.539	.814	.372
envirogroup * experigrpoup2	48.249	1	48.249	2.010	.163
Error	1056.292	44	24.007		
Total	27066.000	49			
Corrected Total	2011.633	48			

a. R Squared = .475 (Adjusted R Squared = .427)

## Post Hoc Tests

### envirogroup

#### Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: satisfaction

LSD

(I) envirogroup	(J) envirogroup	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	2	-5.54 <sup>*</sup>	1.915	.006	-9.40	-1.68
	3	-16.33 <sup>*</sup>	2.793	<.001	-21.95	-10.70
2	1	5.54 <sup>*</sup>	1.915	.006	1.68	9.40
	3	-10.78 <sup>*</sup>	2.338	<.001	-15.50	-6.07
3	1	16.33 <sup>*</sup>	2.793	<.001	10.70	21.95
	2	10.78 <sup>*</sup>	2.338	<.001	6.07	15.50

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square(Error) = 24.007.

\*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

## Appendix 7 – Multiple Linear Regression

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			
						F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.118 <sup>a</sup>	.014	-.007	6.496	.014	.667	1	47	.418
2	.176 <sup>b</sup>	.031	-.011	6.509	.017	.810	1	46	.373
3	.803 <sup>c</sup>	.645	.613	4.029	.614	38.026	2	44	<.001

a. Predictors: (Constant), sex

b. Predictors: (Constant), sex, age

c. Predictors: (Constant), sex, age, environment, experience

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.165	1	28.165	.667	.418 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1983.468	47	42.201		
	Total	2011.633	48			
2	Regression	62.483	2	31.241	.737	.484 <sup>c</sup>
	Residual	1949.150	46	42.373		
	Total	2011.633	48			
3	Regression	1297.249	4	324.312	19.975	<.001 <sup>d</sup>
	Residual	714.384	44	16.236		
	Total	2011.633	48			

a. Dependent Variable: satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), sex

c. Predictors: (Constant), sex, age

d. Predictors: (Constant), sex, age, environment, experience

### Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.383	2.882		7.073	<.001
	sex	1.418	1.736	.118	.817	.418
2	(Constant)	22.705	3.872		5.864	<.001
	sex	1.344	1.742	.112	.772	.444
	age	-1.214	1.349	-.131	-.900	.373
3	(Constant)	-6.850	4.465		-1.534	.132
	sex	.483	1.088	.040	.444	.659
	age	-.494	.840	-.053	-.588	.560
	experience	.461	.119	.513	3.857	<.001
	environment	.275	.109	.333	2.511	.016

a. Dependent Variable: satisfaction