*Article*

# Balancing Wellbeing and Responsibility: CSR's Role in Mitigating Burnout in Hospitality under UN-SDGs

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the effect of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on burnout among employees in China's hospitality industry, highlighting wellness as an essential driver of success and its correlation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It looks at CSR's impact on stress, with employee happiness and resilience acting as mediators, whereas altruism is supposed to act as a moderator. This study collected data from various hospitality organizations across major cities in China over three phases through well-known scales. The findings of structural equation modeling show a negative relationship between CSR and burnout with the mediating effects of happiness and resilience moderated by altruism. The above findings highlight how CSR can reduce worker fatigue while creating a positive work environment within the hospitality sector. This study enriches theoretical knowledge and practical strategies for enhancing employee wellbeing, emphasizing the role of strategic CSR in creating a more sustainable and productive hospitality sector.

## 1. Introduction

The increasing cases of employee burnout seriously threaten the business world, continuous stress ultimately leads to physical, emotional, and mental fatigue [1]. This affects not only individuals personally, but also organizational productivity, job satisfaction, and employee turnover, leading to decrease in efficiency and organization stability [2]. The global economic burden of mental health conditions, including burnout, is significant, with estimated costs of almost USD 1 trillion annually [3]. Moreover, the issue of burnout is critical in today's age, where personal lives, at times, mix with work, necessitating an urgent need for reviewing workplace practices and policies [4]. In addition, employee burnout is directly related to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs), such as ensuring healthy lives (SDG 3), promoting economic growth (SDG 8), and reducing inequalities (SDG 10) [5,6]. However, the WHO recognizing it as an occupational phenomenon within its ICD-11 manual in 2019 shifted the perception away from seeing burnout as a systemic problem, emphasizing the importance of organizational strategies in addressing this issue [7]. Our research seeks to integrate concerns about burnout within Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework to show how CSR initiatives can enhance employee welfare, thereby helping mitigate burnout risk. By using concepts put forth by Glavas [8] and Zhou and Ahmad [9] on psychological factors contained within the CSR framework, this study explores the mediating roles of employee happiness and resilience

as well as the moderation role played by altruism in the CSR–burnout relationship [10–12]. This perspective not only fills existing literature gaps identified by previous studies but is also consistent with broader goals of SDGs and organizational viability.

Indeed, the hospitality industry in China is an ideal context for the current study mainly due to its significant contribution to the country's GDP and the high incidence of employee burnout in this sector [13]. The specificity of the Chinese hospitality industry's challenges, like high customer service demands and long working hours, implies a need for urgency in dealing with burnout. Furthermore, our study will focus on this industry as it responds to SDG 8 call for decent work and economic growth while examining how CSR initiatives can help achieve sustainable development goals and contribute to employee welfare within a unique cultural setting.

Further, the study aims to bridge gaps in the literature by studying happiness, resilience, and altruism concerning CSR–burnout. Despite recognizing high levels of burnout in the hospitality industry, few studies have considered mediators and moderators such as these psychological and behavioral factors [14]. We seek to investigate these variables underlying China's unique socio-cultural environment visàvis its economic context to enhance the understanding of CSR's impact on employee wellbeing and offer insights for managing staff burnout in the hospitality industry and beyond. Our study recognizes the research gaps by examining how CSR influences employee burnout within China's hospitality sector, which is vital for this country's economy but is prone to high staff turnover. The novelty of our research lies in examining the mediating role of employee happiness and resilience and investigating the moderating effect of altruism within the CSR–burnout relationship. This aspect is significant, though unexplored, thus providing an alternative explanation of how CSR can enhance employees' welfare and productivity. Additionally, we look at some dynamics within the Chinese hospitality sector specific to this industry that have implications beyond sustainability and economic growth, as outlined by UN-SDGs. Consequently, our focus allows us to contribute more comprehensively to understanding how CSR supports a resilient workforce across diverse cultural backgrounds and economic contexts. In nutshell summary, our research bridges critical gaps since it explores mediators and moderators that have not been addressed before regarding employee burnout in a CSR context, hence making valuable recommendations both academically and practically related to cases concerning enhancing employees' well-being wellbeing under high-risk occupations like hospitality. This study aims to underscore the importance of holistic, system-based approaches to employee burnout aligned with global sustainability goals.

*Literature Review*

Our study starts by situating it within the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. Demerouti set this model up and Bakker [15] is a crucial grounding base of occupational health psychology explaining how job demands and resources impact employee wellbeing and performance. It classifies job stress risk factors into demands of jobs, physical, social, organizational or psychological aspects that require sustained effort with associated health costs and job resources, which help reach targets at work, lessen job demands, and promote personal development [16,17]. In our conceptual framework, our study identifies CSR initiatives as necessary organizational resources [18] that alleviate job demands and reduce employee burnout [19]. CSR initiatives are considered a resource that counteracts the stress effects of job demands, reducing employee burnout through increased happiness and resilience and capitalizing on capitalization of altruism. This perspective is built upon an understanding that job demands and resources collectively influence employee wellbeing and performance; highlighting the importance of CSR in creating a happy, resilient environment, which reduces job-stress-related risks and basically fosters happiness.

The relationship between CSR and employee psychology is growing, as evidenced by the increasing research that centers on CSR at the intersection of organizational ethics and employee welfare [20–22]. CSR refers to a company's accountability for its social, environmental, and economic impact from its conduct aligned with societal expectations [23,24]. This all-encompassing concept of what CSR entails highlights its pivotal role in influencing employee morale, job satisfaction, and commitment; often, these efforts reflect the enterprise's ethical values, thus nurturing pride and loyalty among employees [25]. Many empirical studies have documented how CSR enhances employees' morale [26], job satisfaction [27], and commitment levels [28], suggesting how organizations' ethical values are reflected within their CSR actions, thereby creating pride in addition to loyalty among employees [29]. The relationship between mitigated employee burnout and CSR practices should be taken into account, especially in industries such as hospitality where employees' wellbeing is valued most [30]. This has been noted by recent works investigating effects of global pandemics like COVID-19 on CSR strategies worldwide [31]. A Chinese food industry case study revealed impacts on an organization's performance employee perception when CSR approaches had to change due to the pandemic outbreak [32]. Moreover, the role of virtual CSR co-creation towards consumer engagement purchase intention for green products indicates changes taking place regarding CSR strategies today [33,34]. Our study relies heavily on these findings to inform us about developing flexible CSR strategies that fit with what workers expect or what society requires [35]. Additionally, similar to our examination on whether or not CSR leads to work exhaustion; there is a parallel between psychological wellness implications of social media use. The mediated connection amid mental health problems and social media use mirrors the complex nature of digital communication as well as its ramifications for individual psychological wellbeing just like how some CSR efforts are felt by workers in terms of job satisfaction [36].

Interest in organizational studies has increasingly been attracted to the link between CSR and employee psychology [22]. CSR refers to a company's accountability for its social, environmental, and economic impact from its conduct aligned with societal expectations [23]. This all-encompassing concept of what CSR entails highlights its pivotal role in influencing employee morale, job satisfaction, and commitment; often, these efforts are seen as a reflection of the enterprise's ethical values, thus nurturing pride and loyalty among employees [25,37]. Better internal CSR improves the subjective wellbeing of employees [12]. This is particularly critical when dealing with sensitive industries like hospitality, where compatibility between organizational values and wellbeing should be achieved at any cost if job stress has to be minimized while increasing satisfaction levels. Therefore:

**H1.** *In the hospitality sector, robust CSR practices are negatively associated with employee burnout.*

Burnout has been linked with employee happiness and is vital to understanding workplace wellbeing [38]. Happiness is often seen as a buffer against burnout [39]. Happiness at work involving positive emotions derived from feeling satisfied with one's job can enable a person to overcome stress or prevent symptoms of burnout [40]. Consequently, happier workers have been consistently found to be more engaged [41], more robust, and generally healthier, reducing their liability to suffer from burnout [42]. Furthermore, employee happiness is significant in explaining how CSR reduces employee burnout. With CSR initiatives, organizations can create a work environment that is positive and affirming to their employees, thereby improving their morale and satisfaction with their jobs [43]. This way, personal values are aligned with organizational ones through CSR, leading to happier employees, high job satisfaction levels, and reduced stress levels [44]. In such cases, employees who thrive in a corporation that embraces CSR are less prone to the adverse effects of burnout. This study contributes to this debate by elucidating CSR's critical role in enhancing employees' wellbeing through happiness mediation. This is consistent with studies finding happier employees display better engagement [45], resilience [46], and mental health [47], thus reducing their vulnerability to burnout [48].

A sophisticated understanding of CSR's psychological benefits has emerged from the growing interest in how CSR initiatives contribute to a positive work environment that bolsters employee morale and job satisfaction [49]. Again, while affirming their ethical conduct, these organizations also align their values with their employees, thus creating a culture of happiness and satisfaction among them [38]. For instance, this alignment is crucial for sectors like hospitality, where employees' welfare directly impacts service quality [50] and customer satisfaction [51]. These perspectives further highlight the relationship between CSR and employee happiness, implying that CSR programs can significantly improve employee morale and job satisfaction [52]. The sense of belongingness developed by this purposeful engagement in CSR programs may help reduce stress levels, lowering burnout potential.

This dynamic is elucidated by using the JD-R model as our theoretical base. In the JD-R model, the balance between resources available to cope with demands presented by the job constitutes one of the main principles [53]. Thus, within this model, CSR is viewed as an important resource because it promotes supportive, value-driven workplaces that enhance employees' wellbeing and happiness, consequently minimizing the risk of burnout. This stance demonstrates the mediating role of joy in explaining the relationship between CSR initiatives and burnout that establishes psychological environments for protection against exhaustion. Applying the JD-R model perspective unveils diverse ways organizational activities affect personal well-being, showing how crucial CSR is in creating a healthy working environment. Based on this discussion:

**H2.** *Employee happiness relates negatively to employee burnout.*

**H3.** *The negative relationship between CSR and employee burnout is mediated by employee happiness.*

In organizational psychology, employee resilience is a growing construct closely linked with burnout [54,55]. It has been found in various studies that resilience has been negatively associated with burnout. More resilient employees manifest fewer signs of burnout than their counterparts since they are better equipped to deal with the stresses and demands of work [56]. Our study focuses on CSR as leverage to counter burnout by enhancing employee resilience [57,58]. The growing research interest in organizational psychology emphasizes resilience as a critical construct closely linked with burnout mitigation [54]. Resilience has consistently been inversely related to burnout, showing that more resilient individuals are less prone to face burnout symptoms [59]. More resilient employees have lower chances of experiencing burnout at work because they possess better means to cope with job pressures [55].

Employee resilience may also mediate the relationship between CSR and employee burnout. For instance, engaging in CSR activities can be one of the ways through which an employee's sense of purpose and belongingness is enhanced, thus enhancing his or her resilience. Consequently, stress effects are reduced and the onset of exhaustion is prevented due to increased resilience [60]. Employees who perceive their organization as socially responsible may feel more supported and valued, reinforcing their ability to adapt to challenges and maintain a positive outlook in the face of workplace stressors.

Our argument underlying CSR's relationship with the resilience of employees and burnout is crucial to understanding how organizations affect wellbeing according to the JD-R model. According to the JD-R model, job demands and resources influence stress levels and engagement. The support provided by CSR facilitates resilience in employees, which helps them cope with the pressures that come with their work by enabling them to engage themselves wholly in their professional calls. This increased resiliency reduces stress, thus mitigating the risk of burnout. Hence, these interpretations indicate how CSR can be a driving factor behind psychological wellbeing through the JD-R model, stressing the importance of resilience as a critical element in mitigating stressors linked to work. Therefore:

**H4.** *Resilience is negatively related to burnout among employees.*

**H5.** *Resilience serves as a mediating link between CSR and employee burnout.*

Altruistic behaviors are exhibited through selfless concern for others' welfare by an individual towards other people [61]. This means doing things for others without expecting anything in return [62]. Altruism is believed to be one of the most important components of OCB in an organizational context, which positively impacts on individuals as well as organizational performance [63]. Employee altruism can play a significant moderating role when considered within the framework of CSR. Guan and Ahmad [20] reported that highly altruistic employees are particularly likely to respond positively to CSR initiatives. This suggests that when CSR practices are effective, it is probable that those who are naturally driven by prosocial thinking might experience much more happiness than others since they always prioritize and take part in any such activities. This implies that CSR may have a more substantial effect on the empathic workers' affective wellbeing compared to others [64].

Employee altruism may also moderate CS employee resilience connection. Resilient employees tend to withstand and bounce back from stressful and adverse situations more efficiently due to some aspects of their personality that they inherit or develop, such as a tendency to be selfless. Employees' understanding may fortify resilience in the face of occupational challenges that companies genuinely care about society, which tends to correspond with their personal values [65]. The JD-R model makes it possible to understand how CSR relates to altruism among workers, thereby affecting specific factors such as happiness and resilience. The inclination for benevolence in individuals can make them regard these actions as true acts of caring for organizations, improving overall mental health. This interpretation shows how individual traits can modify organizational strategies, leading to the delicate relationship between personal qualities and an organization's physical setting in creating a positive work climate. Putting all this together, our hypotheses are as follows:

**H6a.** *Employee altruism moderates the relationship between CSR and employee happiness, such that the relationship is stronger among employees with higher levels of altruism.*

**H6b.** *Employee altruism moderates the relationship between CSR and employee resilience, with a stronger positive impact of CSR on resilience among more altruistic employees.*

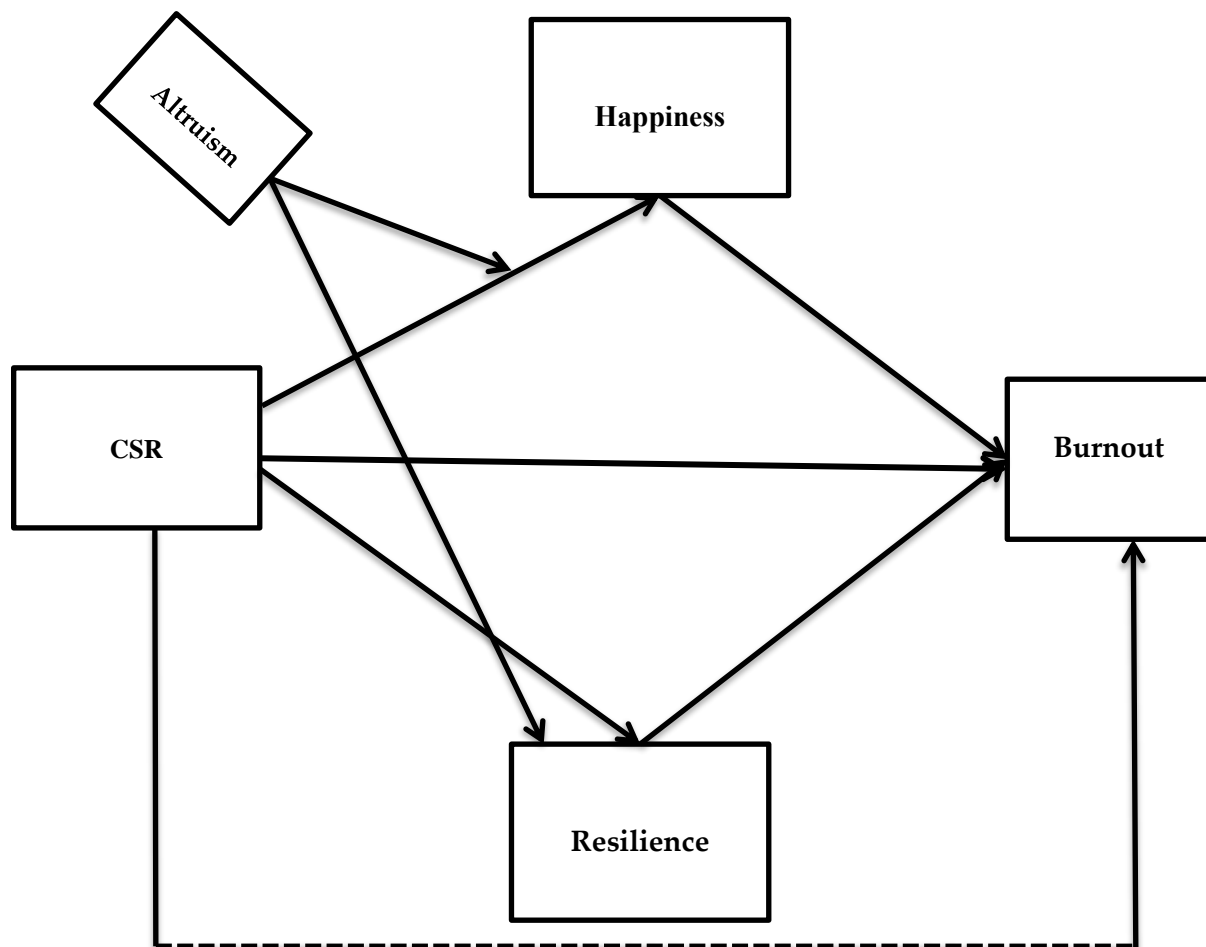The hypothesized model is presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1.** Hypothesized research model: CSR = the independent variable; Burnout = the dependent variable; Happiness and Resilience = the mediating variables; Altruism = the moderating variable.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Study Sector, Participants, and Procedure

Our research is set in the Chinese hospitality industry, a significant part of China's growing service sector. It is an ever-expanding sector that plays a vital role in China's economy as it contributes significantly to its GDP. It is composed of hotels, restaurants, and tourism-related activities, and it is known for its high levels of customer interaction and quality services. The intensity of these demands necessitates a work environment where employees can face stress or burnout. Recently, this field has registered increased figures related to its GDP (CNY 1.48) contribution, with the World Travel & Tourism Council revealing a substantial amount being realized by this section in the national GDP in recent years [66]. Moreover, due to its particular operational characteristics and economic importance, it represents an ideal setting for studying employee burnout within the context of CSR.

We selected highly touristic urban areas where leading hospitality organizations are located as our target for this research. Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou have been chosen because they are the largest contributors to China's tourism industry and combine historical significance, modernity, and economics in the hospitality sector, respectively. With the vast numbers of domestic and foreign tourists coming into these cities daily, the hospitality sectors have become very dynamic, making the workplaces stressful, hence providing relevant backgrounds for studying employee burnout cases. We reached out formally to different organizations operating in these cities' hospitality industries, stressing how academia and the hospitality sector could benefit from each other if they were involved in our study. Positive responses from some organizations enabled us to contact their staff

members directly for data collection through face-to-face surveys during different shifts and within diverse departments.

We deliberately organized this process over three separate stages to improve the reliability and depth of our data collection process. At first, we collected information about employees' perceptions of their companies' CSR programs and employee altruism. About two weeks later, the second stage measured employee happiness and resilience, which indicated their psychological condition at that time. The final stage, conducted again two weeks later, sought to measure employee burnout. This was a structured step-by-step scheme aimed at reducing bias commonly found in single-point data collection, such as common method bias (CMB) [67,68]. Our approach was designed following the Helsinki Declaration ethical guidelines, guaranteeing voluntary participation, informed consent, and privacy for all subjects involved [69]. We maintained the integrity of our study by adhering to strict ethical considerations like informed consent from participants [70,71] and providing them with protection for confidentiality purposes.

The reproducibility and validation of our findings necessitate a further explanation of our methodological approach. In this regard, we discuss the specifics of our sampling strategy, measurements, and variable operationalization. This study intended to represent different experiences in the Chinese hospitality industry, so Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou were chosen as sites for the study due to their importance to the sector. In these cities, our sample consists of employees from various hospitality organizations with a representative mix of the significant contributors to the tourism and hospitality industry. Though this perspective, we were able to examine CSR's effect on worker outcomes under varied conditions but with some relevance where, although measured at the organization level, it still affects the individual level, ultimately influencing an individual's happiness, resilience, burnout, and altruism.

*2.2. Sample Size Determination and Method Bias*

The sample size determination relied on systematic statistical considerations. This study aimed at approximately 300 respondents, and an A priori calculator was used to ensure that meaningful analysis could be made in our research. It required about 363 responses from 500 questionnaires distributed among various hospitality organizations. After thoroughly cleansing data for appropriateness and quality, only 339 valid responses remained, constituting our final sample. Thus, this number was large enough, as the calculator suggested.

Having full knowledge of common method bias and social desirability bias, we employed several methodological safeguards. The survey design was kept neutral to avoid leading questions or prompts that might bias responses [72,73]. This encouraged honest and uninfluenced answers since the respondents were anonymized, thus minimizing social desirability response biases. Furthermore, we carried out Harman's single-factor test as well as factor analyses to evaluate and control for common method variance. These procedures helped to improve our study's reliability and validity, thereby ensuring our findings are actual characteristics of what is being studied, not artefacts of our research methodology.

*2.3. Instrument and Measures*

The variables were operationalized using scales measuring employees' perception of their organization's CSR activities because individual-level perceptions of organizational policies have a significant influence on employee outcomes [74,75]. This supports the perspective that the potential variance in how employees perceive CSR initiatives within the same organization offers a sophisticated understanding of CSR's impact at the individual level. The measurement of burnout and other variables in our research was developed using known scales within the existing literature; thus, each variable adequately captures individual experiences and perceptions. By employing sound psychometric properties with constructs relevant to the context of the investigation, we aimed to capture the complex interplay between organizational CSR practices and individual-level employee outcomes.

CSR was determined using a six-item scale adapted from Turker [76]. As an example, one item, such as "My organization participates in activities that aim to protect and improve the quality of the natural environment", was included in this scale. Burnout (BUR) was measured through a seven-item instrument based on Kristensen and Borritz [77], one of which was "I feel worn out at the end of the working day". Resilience (RES) items were adopted from Smith and Dalen [78], who introduced a brief resilience scale (BRS-6) containing six items. For instance, an item on this scale was "I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times". Employee happiness (EH) was measured using a brief five-item happiness scale developed by García del Junco et al. (2013) [79]. An illustrative item reads, "The organizational climate of my organization is good". Altruism (ALT) was assessed using a four-item scale taken from Ghosh and Khatri [80]. One sample question reads, "I Place the interests of others before self-interest". On each variable, respondents had to rate items using a five-point Likert scale that ranged between 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree'. Respondents' demographics are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The respondents' demographic profile.

| Demographic Characteristics | Frequency and Percentage (n = 339) | Frequency and Percentage (n = 339) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Gender | Male: 183 (54%) | Female: 156 (46%) |
| Age Range | 20–30: 102 (30%) | 31–40: 136 (40%) |
| | 41–50: 68 (20%) | 51+: 34 (10%) |
| Professional Role | Hotel Managers: 119 (35%) | Hospitality Staff: 136 (40%) |
| | Support Staff: 51 (15%) | Administrative Staff: 34 (10%) |
| Years of Experience | <5 years: 85 (25%) | 5–10 years: 119 (35%) |
| | 11–20 years: 85 (25%) | >20 years: 51 (15%) |
| Educational Background | Diploma/Certificate: 34 (10%) | Bachelor's: 170 (50%) |
| | Master's: 102 (30%) | Doctorate or higher: 34 (10%) |
| Type of Institution | Hotels/Resorts: 238 (70%) | Other Hospitality Facilities: 101 (30%) |

## 3. Results

In Table 2, the psychometric properties of our measurement model are reported. Due to weak factor loadings, we dropped two items, one from the ALT and one from BUR constructs, ensuring construct measurements were robust [81,82]. Items loadings for ALT ranged between 0.820 and 0.874, thus indicating a strong reliability of individual items. The Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha$) and composite reliability (CR) values for ALT were found to be 0.806 and 0.886, respectively, which, in both cases, exceeded the criterion value of 0.70, suggesting its high internal consistency. For ALT, the average variance extracted (AVE) was at 0.721, well above the acceptable limit of 0.50 [83,84], thereby showing good convergent validity.

BUR, on the other hand, had item loadings ranging from 0.739 to 0.845. The construct indicated excellent internal consistency, as evidenced by $\alpha = 0.872$ and CR = 0.904. The AVE for BUR was 0.611, which is higher than the recommended threshold, confirming convergent validity. On CSR, item loadings ranged from 0.701 to 0.855, thus validating this construct's internal consistency with $\alpha = 0.869$ and CR = 0.898. The AVE value for CSR = 0.597, implying a satisfactory level of convergent validity. EH ranged between 0.731 to 0.873. The reliability in this construct is high based on $\alpha = 0.846$ and CR = 0.891. With AVE = 0.621, EH has a good level of convergent validity. Lastly, item loading for the RES scale ranged between 0.723 and 0.970 with $\alpha = 0.868$ and CR = 0.906. Accordingly, AVE (0.662), surpasses the cut-off point of 0.50. Figure 2 includes the measurement model of our research.

**Table 2.** Factor loadings, reliability, and validity.

| Construct | Item | Item Loading | SD | T Statistics | *p* Values | *α* | rho_A | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ALT** | | | | | | **0.806** | **0.806** | **0.886** | **0.721** |
| | ALT-1 | 0.820 | 0.021 | 39.879 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | ALT-2 | 0.854 | 0.018 | 48.554 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | ALT-3 | 0.874 | 0.018 | 48.055 | 0.000 | | | | |
| **BUR** | | | | | | **0.872** | **0.872** | **0.904** | **0.611** |
| | BUR-1 | 0.75 | 0.032 | 23.579 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | BUR-3 | 0.739 | 0.03 | 24.245 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | BUR-4 | 0.761 | 0.029 | 26.343 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | BUR-5 | 0.764 | 0.024 | 32.189 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | BUR-6 | 0.845 | 0.025 | 34.371 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | BUR-7 | 0.822 | 0.021 | 39.699 | 0.000 | | | | |
| **CSR** | | | | | | **0.869** | **0.901** | **0.898** | **0.597** |
| | CSR-1 | 0.802 | 0.052 | 15.577 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | CSR-2 | 0.818 | 0.038 | 21.518 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | CSR-3 | 0.701 | 0.069 | 10.135 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | CSR-4 | 0.855 | 0.029 | 29.461 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | CSR-5 | 0.732 | 0.057 | 12.748 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | CSR-6 | 0.714 | 0.065 | 10.957 | 0.000 | | | | |
| **EH** | | | | | | **0.846** | **0.85** | **0.891** | **0.621** |
| | EH-1 | 0.873 | 0.015 | 59.025 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | EH-2 | 0.798 | 0.026 | 30.345 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | EH-3 | 0.731 | 0.027 | 26.599 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | EH-4 | 0.788 | 0.021 | 36.915 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | EH-5 | 0.741 | 0.027 | 27.707 | 0.000 | | | | |
| **RES** | | | | | | **0.868** | **0.885** | **0.906** | **0.662** |
| | RES-1 | 0.97 | 0.005 | 205.253 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | RES-2 | 0.735 | 0.031 | 23.685 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | RES-4 | 0.808 | 0.024 | 34.069 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | RES-5 | 0.809 | 0.023 | 35.871 | 0.000 | | | | |
| | RES-6 | 0.723 | 0.033 | 21.954 | 0.000 | | | | |

The dependent variables were explained significantly by independent variables, as indicated by R-squared values; this includes BUR (0.349), EH (0.228), and RES (0.180). Our R-squared values (Table 3), though seemingly below the 0.5 reference figure usually mentioned in the social research literature, must be interpreted within the complex and multidimensional nature of the hospitality industry and investigated psychological constructs. Given the complexity and multifaceted nature of social sciences research, involving complex human behavior, the relatively lower level of the R-squared value is a commonly observed phenomenon in many research studies [85]. In fields like ours dealing with human behavior as well as organizational practices, predicting outcomes with a high R square may be problematic because of the inherent variability and diversity in individual experiences or organizational contexts. It is significant that higher R-squares show a stronger model's explanatory power, but those lower than 0.5 should not mean that the model is bad or does not matter, especially in exploratory studies or studies aimed at understanding new or under-researched phenomena. Despite the model's limitations, we contend that our research is not only of importance from the viewpoint of the current findings but also in terms of the onset of a deeper awareness to the intricate consequences of CSR on employees' outcomes. Through the identification of those areas where the application of CSR practices is evident, our study creates a foundation for future research to tackle these relationships in a more complex manner by employing more advanced models.
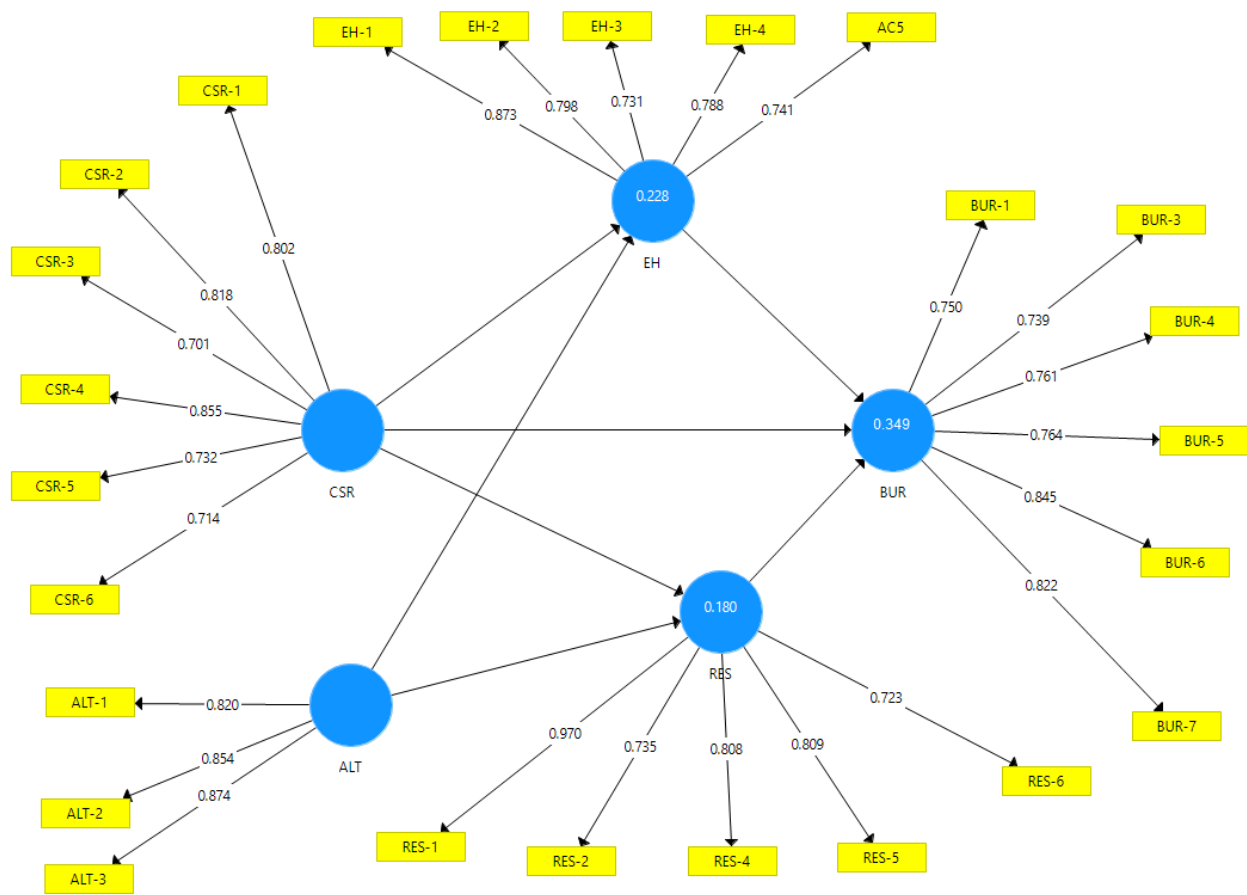
**Figure 2.** The measurement model.

**Table 3.** R-square and effect size ($f^2$).

| Variable | R-Square | R-Square Adjusted | f-Square | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | ALT | BUR | CSR | EH | RES |
| BUR | 0.349 | 0.342 | | | 0.033 | 2.097 | |
| EH | 0.228 | 0.223 | 0.217 | | 0.029 | | |
| RES | 0.180 | 0.175 | 0.188 | | | | |

Strong internal consistency and discriminant validity among constructs were confirmed through correlation analysis and HTMT ratios, respectively. There was a strong negative association between EH and BUR, as shown by the significant correlations, especially at −0.531. Table 4 summarizes these results.

**Table 4.** The results of discriminant validity and correlations.

| | Square Root and Correlations of AVE | | | | | HTMT Ratios | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ALT | BUR | CSR | EH | RES | ALT | BUR | CSR | EH | RES |
| ALT | 0.849 | | | | | | 0.591 | 0.453 | 0.565 | 0.505 |
| BUR | −0.494 | 0.781 | | | | | | 0.182 | 0.761 | 0.237 |
| CSR | 0.399 | −0.178 | 0.772 | | | | | | 0.255 | 0.177 |
| EH | 0.473 | −0.531 | 0.245 | 0.788 | | | | | | 0.172 |
| RES | 0.425 | −0.205 | 0.162 | 0.152 | 0.814 | | | | | |

Our data analysis (Table 5) delivered substantive results that were interesting. One of the intriguing findings was a strong negative relationship between CSR and employee BUR ($\beta = -0.149$; $p < 0.001$), showing that high levels of CSR are connected with low BUR in the hospitality industry. This shows meaningful CSR initiatives can improve the work environment by reducing stress and BUR. In the same way, there was also a significant, direct relationship between positive emotional states at work (EH) and BUR ($\beta = -0.43$, $p < 0.001$). This result emphasizes the protective function of positive emotional states in workplaces. An equally important reason for this is connected to the fact that higher RES leads to less job stress or reduced chances of burnout, as expressed in ($\beta = -0.196$; $p < 0.01$). The mediated relationship between CSR and BUR via EH (H3) proved significant: $\beta = -0.102$; $p < 0.001$. Therefore, organizations indirectly influence BUR among employees by enhancing their employees' happiness. Regarding this finding, positive psychological states are integral in mediating organizational initiatives' effects. Additionally, the mediated relationship between CSR and BUR via RES was supported with $\beta = -0.063$; $p < 0.05$. RES serves as a link between the CSR and BUR relationship. The interaction effect of CSR and ALT on the BUR via EH and RES was significant, explaining why CSR alone may not be sufficient in enhancing the workplace for employees. Therefore, our analysis provides a more impactful insight into how CSR, ALT, EH, RES, and BUR are related in different ways, which is useful for academic research and practical application within the hospitality industry. These results are fully summarized in Table 5 below for the readers, while Figure 3 includes the complete structural model of our research.
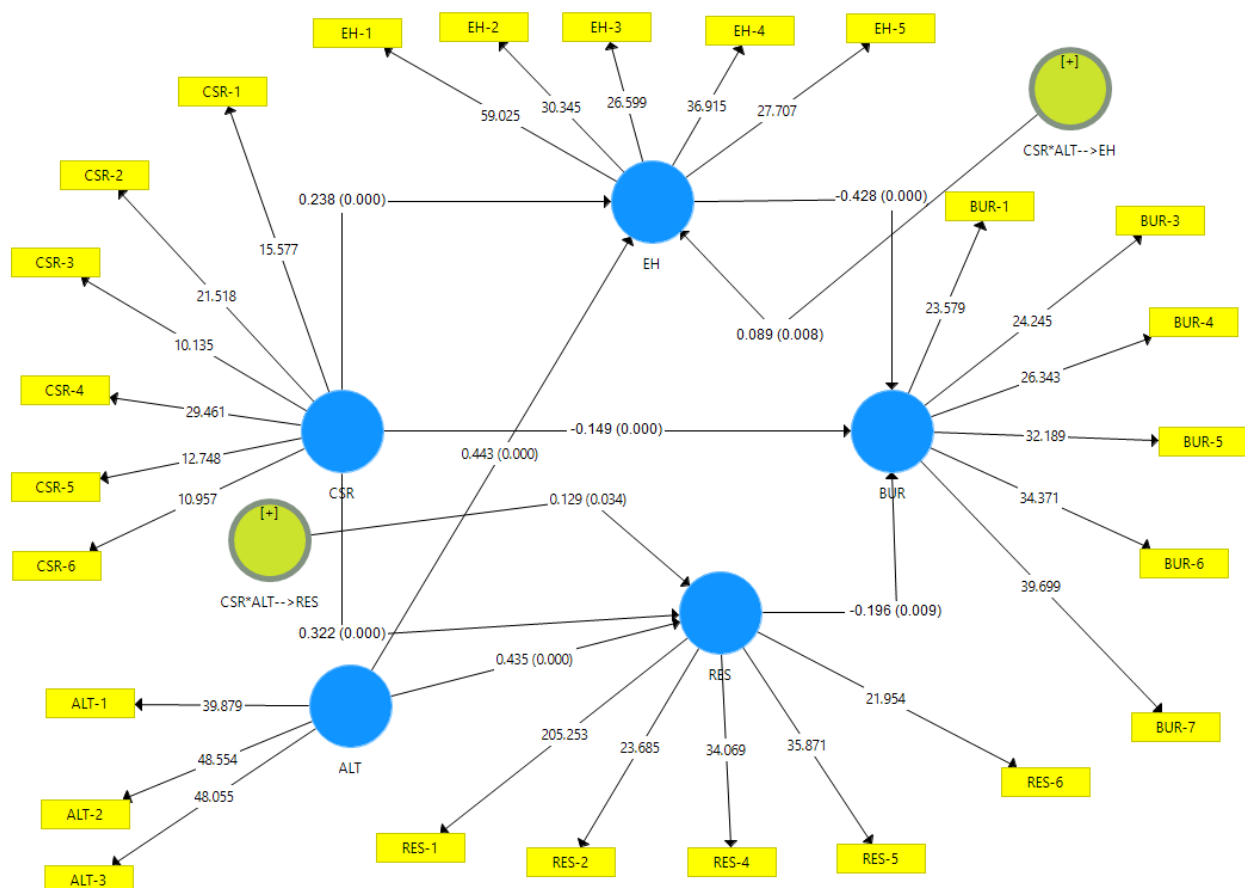


**Figure 3.** The structural model.

**Table 5.** Hypotheses analysis.

| | Beta Value | Standard Deviation | T Statistics | *p* Values | Confidence Intervals | | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | 2.50% | 97.50% | |
| csr→bur (h1) | −0.149 | 0.031 | −4.806 | 0.000 | −0.199 | −0.017 | Supported |
| eh→bur (h2) | −0.428 | 0.049 | −8.735 | 0.000 | −0.681 | −0.262 | Supported |
| res→bur (h4) | −0.196 | 0.039 | −5.026 | 0.009 | −0.214 | −0.135 | Supported |
| csr→eh→bur (h3) | −0.102 | 0.044 | −2.318 | 0.000 | −0.142 | −0.078 | Supported |
| csr*alt→eh→bur (h6) | −0.099 | 0.024 | −4.125 | 0.000 | −0.163 | −0.042 | Supported |
| csr→res → bur (h5) | −0.063 | 0.012 | −5.259 | 0.023 | −0.092 | −0.033 | Supported |
| csr*alt→res→bur (h7) | −0.088 | 0.018 | −4.889 | 0.000 | −0.128 | −0.028 | Supported |

## 4. Discussion

This study has attempted to highlight the novel information about employee burnout in the Chinese hospitality industry, emphasizing the role a company's CSR practices play in protecting employees from stressful working conditions. In light of the statistical results, all hypotheses were supported, and it can be concluded that this research contributes to theoretical frameworks and practical application of knowledge regarding employee wellbeing. In line with prior research, for example Liu and Cherian [12], high CSR perceptions have been suggested to be negatively related to worker burnout (H1), which confirms earlier studies that found that increased CSR perception could alleviate burnout through decreasing job stressors. Similarly, the second hypothesis (H2) surmised that there is an inverse relationship between employee happiness and burnout, which was confirmed by our statistical findings. This signifies the importance of CSR within a positive working environment, as stated by Bakker and Oerlemans [42] who indicated happiness as one of the factors against working pressure. Our examination, thus, fills the gap in the literature on the effectiveness of CSR initiatives among highly stressed areas such as hospitality by showing quantitatively that reducing burnout rates is an impact attributable to implementing CSR activities. In addition, we have also confirmed H4, which showed that resilience was inversely linked to burnout levels of employees, as already had been stated by West and Dyrbye [86].

Further, the findings relating to mediation roles played by employee happiness and resilience in the relationship between CSR and burnout (H3 and H5) contribute to the JD-R model, which shows how balancing job demands with adequate resources can significantly promote wellbeing at work, which is in line with the findings of Bakker and de Vries [53]. It demonstrates how individual attributes like happiness and resilience, when combined with organizational CSR practices, can successfully counteract burnout, thereby expanding its scope. As explained above, it contributes theoretically and offers insights to organizations looking to implement strategic CSR initiatives to combat workplace stress. Our results also show that altruism moderates the relationship between CSR and both happiness and resilience (H6a and H6b). This finding adds a new dimension to our understanding of how personal and organizational factors interact to influence employee outcomes, thus offering a fresh perspective on designing CSR strategies that leverage employee altruism for enhanced wellbeing.

In addition, our research indirectly contributes to the more extensive discussions on sustainable development, particularly UN-SDGs, by showing how CSR practices enhance employees' lives and reduce burnout cases. Such an observation makes this study relevant concerning UN-SDG objectives like promoting decent work conditions (SDG 8) and ensuring healthy lives and wellbeing (SDG 3) at all ages. This connection, while not the primary focus of our study, situates our findings within a global context of striving for sustainable and humane work environments. However, it is notable to consider these insights within the complexity of human behavior and organizational dynamics. While our model's explanatory power may appear limited, it reflects the complex ways that CSR activities influence individual outcomes within the hospitality industry. In doing so, we

encourage further exploration into variables that may further explore such relationships, highlighting the need for future studies.

### 4.1. Theoretical Implications

Our study stands out as a milestone in the academic discussion on employee burnout in the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework, especially in the Chinese hospitality sector. In our study, the concepts of employee happiness, resilience, and altruism, which are somewhat missing in the CSR–burnout framework, are integrated. On the one hand, this extension of the existing discourse fills the gaps suggested by previous studies, such as the work by Demerouti and Bakker [15] on the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model. We construct our work from the traditional corporate-centric perspective on CSR, but we also investigate the psychological dimension of the employees, which has been less studied by previous researchers such as Liu and Ahmad [87]. Previous studies have shown a relationship between CSR and various employee outcomes, but we uniquely examine how CSR influences happy and resilient employee states, which then reduce burnout. This study not only widens our perception of CSR's influences but also features an in-depth insight into its role within the Chinese hospitality industry, which is characterized by high levels of stress. Our work offers an indigenous point of view that has added to the findings of Fu and Ahmad [88] concerning the effect of organizational practices on an unspecified context different from the socio-economic context.

Also, we used employee altruism as a moderator in the CSR–employee outcome relationship. This is an aspect that is less covered in the existing literature. This presents an entirely new dimension to academic discourse, which implies that one's personal characteristics, such as altruism, are determinants of CSR initiatives in mitigating job burnout. This study's outcome seems consistent with, yet more than, that of Ahmad and Ahmad [64] regarding the individual variation of perceiving and reacting to CSR strategies. Using the JD-R model as a starting point to explain how employee happiness and resilience act as mediators of the JD-R model, we can add to the model's application areas beyond the traditional ones. Our research supports and improves the idea of the job demands and resources impacting the employees' wellness, a principle described by Bakker and Oerlemans [42]. We show that employee happiness and resilience are the fundamental mechanisms through which CSR programs can improve the work-life balance as well as decrease occupational stress and continue to explain the relations within the JD-R model.

### 4.2. Practical Implications

Of note, our research offers very crucial practical implications for the hospitality industry, underlining CSR as a means to reduce employee burnout. This requires that hospitality organizations implement CSR programs and actively incorporate them into their organizational culture. This integration helps foster a supportive working environment and enhances happiness and resilience among employees, which are critical elements in decreasing the risk of burnout. Perhaps managers of hotel chains should choose CSR plans that accord with employees' interests and the specific natures of their jobs, such as involving them in volunteer work or environmental conservation projects.

This study also shows how important happiness amongst workers can be in preventing burning out in this high-pressure business sector. Organizations involved in hospitality must invest in activities that promote workers' wellbeing, provide services for mental health promotion within the industry and cultivate a positive workplace environment. This might involve flexible hours that allow staff to work at any time convenient for them, rewarding systems that are used to appreciate hardworking employees, and professional development initiatives aimed at upholding job satisfaction among staff members. Equally important is resilience, which acts as a guard against burnout syndrome. The function of resilience and stress management training cannot be overstated here; it would be better if workshops were organized to assist staff with developing effective coping strategies during times of change and stressors or even maintaining positive attitudes. Also, understanding the effect of

CSR activities on employee altruism is essential. Managers working within the hospitality realm should encourage altruistic behaviors while creating an atmosphere where kindness and teamwork are cherished and encouraged. Furthermore, our conclusions underline the need to align hospitality practices with UN-SDGs. Suppose they want to address employee welfare issues alongside preventing burnout. In that case, they must embrace CSR measures that link them with SDG 3 (good health and well-being wellbeing) and SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), making it a sustainable industry practice model.

### 4.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

On the flipside, this study is significant as we have established a link between CSR practices and employee outcomes in the hospitality industry. Still, we have some limitations that could be addressed in future work. To begin with, the R-squared values are relatively low. The values here show that the model explains a little of the variation in the dependent variables. This is usually the case in social sciences research, where a wide range of variables can affect people's and organizations' behaviour, not captured in a single experiment. Future research should involve examining other factors and theories that may be useful in providing a more integrated view of the dynamics. A deeper investigation of widespread background factors, including cultural context, industry-related problems, and technological advancement, may be necessary to develop models with significant explanatory power. Similarly, our research was conducted in a particular industry and country, which may limit its generalizability to other areas and cultures by providing deep insights. Future studies should consider replicating this investigation in various sectors and countries to test whether these relationships between CSR, employee happiness, resilience, altruism, and burnout exist in different settings. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported measures, susceptible to biases such as social desirability or individual perception, suggests that future studies might benefit from using more objective instruments or diverse information sources to enhance reliability. Another direction for further exploration is looking at alternative mediators or moderators of the CSR–burnout relationship, like organizational justice or work–life balance. It can, therefore, be concluded that there exists a need to examine how different factors within this framework interact in order to impact on employees' wellbeing as well as burnout.

### 5. Conclusions

To conclude, our study makes significant theoretical and practical contributions concerning the interplay between CSR practices and employee wellbeing in the Chinese hospitality industry, corresponding with the main SDGs. Theoretically, we add to the existing literature by explaining intricate connections between CSR, employee happiness, resilience, altruism, and burnout. Our results uncover the hidden factors involved, thus giving a new perspective that bridges gaps by understanding how such initiatives influence workers' psychological outcomes. Our research emphasizes the importance of incorporating well-being into CSR strategies; this is a way through which hospitality organizations could realize increases in productivity increase as they strive towards employee job satisfaction, thereby contributing to the broader objectives of sustainable economic growth and healthy work environments as outlined in SDG 3 and SDG 8. Our research recognizes that fitting all organizational behavior impacts into one model is challenging and low R-squared values show this. Rather than undermining our findings, this statement enables us to understand that more studies should be carried out about the multidimensional influences of CSR on employees' performance. It invites future research to adopt more comprehensive models that could yield greater explanatory power and further validate the observed relationships

Practically, these insights from our study support integrated and holistic CSR approaches that give priority to employee welfare as being crucial for the purpose of organization's success and sustainability. The significance of these strategic findings for the hospitality sector cannot be undermined, especially considering the need for practices that foster economic prosperity and employees' wellness. Our research contributes

to global discussions on sustainable development by highlighting how companies can improve employee wellbeing through CSR. It, therefore, improves academic understanding regarding the impact of CSR while calling upon organizations to adopt sustainable development-oriented and welfare-based comprehensive approaches towards it.

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