

Sustainable human resources management in crisis contexts: interaction of socially responsible labour practices for the wellbeing of employees

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Abstract

Periods of recession and economic crisis pose great challenges to companies committed to quality of work and by extension to their human resources (HR) departments. The need for adjustments can be a great opportunity for the implementation of socially responsible labour practices for the wellbeing of employees and in line with sustainable development and sustainable development goals. This study analyses the effects of the interaction between different socially responsible human resource management labour practices on three variables of employee wellbeing: job satisfaction, job stress and trust in management. Prior to the application of various statistical models, a correlation analysis of labour practices is carried out. Two types of statistical models are used depending on the type of variable to be explained. The ordinal logit has been applied to variables "trust in management" and "level of job stress", which are not continuous. And the linear regression model for the variable "job satisfaction", which is continuous. Based on the analysis of data from 1,346 workers from the 2010 Quality of Life at Work Survey in Catalonia, the results show the effectiveness of the combination of applied practices related to personal quality of life aspects, such as work-life balance, non-discrimination or environmental workplace conditions, as a determining factor for generally increasing the wellbeing of employees in times of crisis. However, practices aimed at achieving greater employee involvement, are more effective when applied individually. The importance of job stability to increase employee wellbeing in times of crisis is to be highlighted.

Keywords: Sustainable Human Resource Management; Socially responsible labour practices; Employee wellbeing; Interaction effects; economic crisis; corporate social responsibility; labour quality; job quality.

1. Introduction

Globalization and economic uncertainty, as well as increasingly competitive labour markets, pose critical challenges to business. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting social and economic crisis are accelerating the reorientation of the business mission in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations (United Nations, 2015). In the workplace, SDGs direct the mission of organizations to ensure that their employees have a safe working environment and are well trained; to foster the awareness and skills required to create productive employees, as well as proactive citizens who contribute to society (Chams and Garcia-Blandon, 2019).

Along these lines, corporate social responsibility (CSR) for employees has been aimed at sustainable human resource management (HRM) for more than a decade (Kramar, 2014). This type of management seeks social and human results for the good of the employees, moving beyond the more traditional vision in which such management was simply a mediator between the strategy and the financial results of the company. In this way, responsible and sustainable HRM practices contribute to human development and social capital within the organization (Ehnert, 2011; Kramar, 2014; Jang & Ardichvili, 2020; Vallaster, 2017). The literature indicates that if CSR and SDGs are integrated, they can significantly improve the social as well as economic and environmental conditions of the country (Lu et al. 2020; Poddar et al. 2018) Sustainable HRM is supported by the SDGs, such as SDG 4, 5, 8 and 10. SDG 4 aims to ensure an inclusive education, equitable and of quality, and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. The objective of SDG 5 is to achieve gender equality. SDG 8 aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Finally, SDG 10, whose objective is to reduce inequality by promoting socially responsible labour practices, such as adequate training in the workplace, non-discrimination in employment, fair and non-discriminatory pay, flexible working hours and schedules that allow for adequate work-life balance and provide job stability (Celma et al., 2014, Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019; Martínez-García, et al., 2018). Moreover, as the European Commission (2011) points out, the creation of higher quality and higher productivity jobs reduces the potential adverse consequences for a company.

Despite globalization, a determining element for the implementation of socially responsible labour practices is related to the national context (Ehnert, et al. 2014; Ehnert

et al., 2016). Therefore, unlike in other countries such as Sweden, in countries such as Spain, on which this study focuses, companies have until now mostly oriented sustainability towards economic results (Zaugg et al., 2001, cited in Kramar, 2014). Likewise, the reaction of countries to environmental situations, such as economic crises, also influences the labour practices implemented by companies (Baumgartner, 2014; Brewster and Bennett, 2010).

In the area of labour, the last economic and financial crisis in 2008 led to widespread behaviour to contain labour costs (McDonnell and Burgess, 2013; Teague and Roche, 2014). This resulted in significant salary reductions, the outsourcing of employees, the replacement of full-time contracts by part-time contracts, a reduced protection against dismissal, the reduction of employee training and development actions, etc. All these measures had a negative impact on the quality of work and thus on the wellbeing of employees at work (Martínez-García, et al. 2018; Van de Voorde, et al. 2012).

The recent events related to the coronavirus crisis suggest that new actions in the field of employment may reproduce many of the actions of the last economic crisis (Aryatama, 2020; Hamouche, 2020; Koirala and Acharya, 2020; Meri, 2020). However, the need for adjustments at this time may offer a great opportunity for the implementation of sustainable and responsible HRM that, in line with sustainable development promoted by the UNO, enhances the welfare of one of the most relevant stakeholders of companies, namely, the employees. In this context, the first research question that grounds the present study is the following:

1. Can employee wellbeing be positively affected by a sustainable HRM implemented through responsible labour practices?

In a crisis environment, the workers' priorities may be different from those in times of economic growth. For example, in the case of Spain, among other relevant results, Martínez-García, et al. (2018) found that employees placed a greater priority on job stability than on other job quality elements, such as promotion possibilities.

By virtue of this, the second research question is as follows:

2. What socially responsible labour practices are most effective in improving employee welfare in times of crisis?

On the other hand, in recent decades, there has been a shared consensus in the literature on HRM that studies on the impact of work practices on employees should focus on the combined impact of different practices and HRM systems rather than on the individual impact of practices, since the effects of practices depend on their interrelationships. However, there is still much uncertainty about the synergies and interaction effects that are generated between different HR practices, and it is suggested that more studies of this type are needed (Boon et al., 2019). Also from sustainable HRM there is the need for further research on synergies and interactions among practices (Anlesinya and Susomrith, 2020). Thus, the third research question posed in this study is the following:

3. Which combination, if any, of socially responsible labour practices increases the employee's wellbeing more than do isolated human resource practices?

Therefore, this study analyses, for times of crisis, the influence on the wellbeing of employees, of socially responsible labour practices' applied as a specific type of sustainable HRM (Gupta, 2017; Stahl et al., 2019). Three variables commonly used in HRM impact studies (Celma et al., 2018; Pouliakas and Theodossiou, 2010; Van de Voorde et al., 2012) are considered as indicators of wellbeing: job satisfaction (Macky and Boxall, 2007), job stress (Rizvi and Rana, 2012) and trust in management (Macky and Boxall, 2007). Job satisfaction is an indicator of emotional wellbeing, physical wellbeing is collected through job stress, and trust in management is indicative of social wellbeing.

The study is structured as follows. Following this introduction, the following section provides a literature review on the impact of responsible HRM practices on job satisfaction, the level of job stress and on trust in superiors. The methodology used in the empirical study and the results obtained from the analysis of the impact of responsible labour practices on employee wellbeing are then presented. The article ends with a discussion and conclusions.

3.- Impact of socially responsible labour practices on employee wellbeing: literature review

The wellbeing of the employee can be considered and analysed from different perspectives, being happiness-related, health and social wellbeing the most used in the literature (Celma et al., 2018; Pouliakas and Theodossiou, 2010; Van de Voorde et al,

2012). Happiness-related wellbeing is based on one's workplace's subjective experiences, which can be measured, among others, by job satisfaction. Health wellbeing refers to objective physiological measures and bodily health subjective experiences, such as job stress. Social wellbeing is based on the interactions and quality of relationships between employees and their employers and/or the supervisor and is measured by trust in management.

In addition to being one of the indicators of employee wellbeing, job satisfaction is also an important organizational indicator (Sánchez et al., 2007) and thus has been the subject of numerous studies from the perspective of HRM. The level of employee job satisfaction varies according to certain aspects and the nature of the job; for example, it could vary based on the amount and type of remuneration, promotion, co-workers and the organizational context (Shabnam and Sarker, 2012). When the employee is satisfied with his or her work, his or her response to the job is adequate from an organizational point of view (increased efficiency and quality of work). In the case of job dissatisfaction, as can happen in times of crisis, the effect is the opposite and can even lead the worker to leave the company (Lee, et al., 2008).

On the other hand, work-related stress is one of the main problems identified in the work environment in the European Union and the world (Seňová and Antošová, 2014). The increase in this phenomenon has resulted in high costs for employees, companies and society as a whole. For this reason alone, it deserves research to find ways to reduce job stress within organizations (Bell et al., 2012, Meri, 2020). Economic crisis environments that create worsening working conditions such as lower pay, longer working hours, increased workloads, job insecurity, loss of control over work (as opposed to self-control of working time (Fernet et al., 2004), and less supervisor support (Seňová and Antošová, 2014) increase the job stress levels and also the number of affected workers.

Trust in superiors arises from the relationships between the company, managers and workers. Numerous studies have recognized the fundamental role of HRM in building and maintaining trust relationships within and between organizations and have shown that trust extends to almost every area of HRM policy (Baptiste, 2008). However, in times of crisis, this trust tends to diminish, as companies are more concerned about economic performance than the wellbeing of employees.

The emerging research on sustainable HRM suggests that HRM practices can help achieve the long-term sustainability of organizations by improving the negative effects of work. This perspective is in contrast to the traditional strategic HRM approach view, in which HRM mainly last objective is company's profitability (Jang and Ardichvili, 2020). In addition, the implementation of socially responsible labour practices can lead to a more ethical and sustainable workplace (Kundu and Gahlawat, 2015). In this context, the following is a review of the literature on the application of socially responsible labour practices and their impact on employee welfare in the areas of remuneration, recruitment, occupational health and safety, working time, work-life balance, training, internal information and communication, equality and non-discrimination. These areas were selected for analysis as they are in the framework that was initially established by the EU Green Paper on Promoting a European Framework for CSR (European Commission, 2001). They are also common to those established by other institutions, such as the Global Compact (UN), the Guidelines of OECD, the Social Accountability International (SA 8000), the Global Reporting Initiative, the Tripartite Declaration by the ILO (UN), and ISO 26000 (Celma et al., 2014; Barrena-Martinez et al., 2019; Martínez-García et al., 2018). They comprise the following areas: lifelong learning; the empowerment of workers; better information within the company; a better balance between work, family and leisure; greater diversity of human resources (HHRR); equal pay and career prospects for women; profit-sharing or shareholding; and consideration for employability and safety in the workplace.

With respect to remuneration practices, previous studies show how performance-related pay (Böckerman et al., 2012), compensation packages (Gazioglu and Tansel, 2006), contingent compensation (Sarker and Afroze, 2014), and the receipt of high salaries (Borra and Gómez, 2012) positively affect employee satisfaction. Performance-related pay reduces job stress (Harley et al., 2007) and increases trust in management (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2002). Organizations that base their remuneration systems on performance have a high level of employee's trust and their results are better than those of companies that do not use performance-based remuneration systems (Tzafrir, 2005).

For hiring practices, most studies find a negative association between contract temporariness and satisfaction and wellbeing (De Cuyper and De Witte, 2007). Thus, the perception of job insecurity related to the fear of losing one's job leads to a feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the employee (Boxall and Macky, 2014). It has also been

found that one of the factors that has the most negative impact on job stress is the insecurity arising from temporary employment (De Cuyper and De Witte, 2007). Additionally, job stability helps to increase the employees' trust in their managers (Godard and Frege, 2013).

Practices that improve the physical security of employees are crucial to raising levels of job satisfaction (Borra and Gómez, 2012; Celma et al., 2018) and achieving greater trust in management (Godard and Frege, 2013). Conversely, poorer working conditions, such as high noise levels or lack of privacy, contribute to greater job stress (Boxall and Macky, 2014).

Most studies show that practices that affect working hours and work-life balance also contribute to improving job satisfaction by avoiding overtime, heavier workloads or greater demands when time is not sufficient to manage the work assigned (Guest, 2017; Andreassi et al., 2014). Celma et al. (2018), Guest (2002) and Kucel and Vilalta-Buñi (2013) find evidence that work-life balance programmes are positive for the workers' job satisfaction. Likewise, most studies indicate that the longer the working day is, the greater the job stress that the worker will have (Bell et al., 2012). Likewise, work-life balance practices allow for a reduction in job stress levels (Chiang et al., 2010). With regard to the impact of working hours and work-life balance on trust in management, studies are scarcer. Bardoel (2003) finds that the use of HRM practices that allow flexibility in working hours can increase trust in management, as employees can better balance work and personal life. Peetz et al. (2003) find that management support is particularly important to counteract pressures to work longer hours.

As for training practices, there is ample evidence of their positive impact on employee wellbeing, especially on job satisfaction (Andreassi et al., 2014; Böckerman et al., 2012; Celma et al., 2016; Guest, 2017) and trust in management (Celma et al., 2016; Vanhala and Ahteela, 2011). However, no evidence was found of their impact on job stress.

Practices that contribute to better information and communication in the company create opportunities for greater employee engagement and lead to higher levels of job satisfaction (Andreassi et al., 2014; Böckerman et al., 2012; Celma et al., 2018; Guest, 2017) and greater trust in management by generating a feeling of being heard and leading to an open work environment (Celma et al., 2018; Kidron, et al., 2016). Better internal communication also contributes to a decrease in job stress (Kalmi and Kauhanen, 2008).

Finally, employment practices that aim to achieve equal opportunities and non-discrimination raise levels of job satisfaction (Celma et al., 2018; Guest, 2002). The employees' trust in management and in the entire organization is connected to the perception of equity, equal opportunity and non-discrimination (Celma et al., 2018; Godard and Frege, 2013). Similarly, practices such as the lack of clear promotion processes that do not ensure equal opportunities can lead to increased job stress (Nelson and Burke, 2000). Job stress can also stem from practices such as ethnic discrimination (Miller and Travers, 2005).

In addition to the study of the impacts of individual work practices on employee wellbeing, since the late 20th century, the literature on the impact of HRM has highlighted the need to take into account the combined effects of the clustering of work practices (Kepes et al. 2008; Boon et al., 2019), which implies the concept of an HRM system. According to de Guerci et al. (2017), there is a need to test the existence and to assess the nature of the synergies between HRM practices. Boon et al. (2019) show that the practices of an HRM system can be related to each other in different ways. For example, an additive relationship assumes that human resource practices have independent effects and add up without influencing each other. In contrast, in an interactive relationship, the effectiveness of one practice depends on the presence or level of other practices. Practices may, for example, be substitutes for each other or show positive or negative synergies (Delery, 1998). In addition, for the development of sustainable HRM, it is considered relevant to distinguish between the individual effects of socially responsible labour practices and the results of possible interactions between them (Anlesinya and Susomrith, 2020).

Empirical studies that have analysed the impact of the clustering of HRM practices on outcomes generally point to a synergy effect between practices, although no clear evidence has been obtained on how this occurs (Delery and Doty, 1996). Among the first studies that raised this issue were those by Arthur (1992), Kochan, et al. (1991) and MacDuffie (1995), which concluded that HRM practices should be integrated with complementary clusters of core business functions and with the overall company strategy in order to be effective. Subsequent studies, such as those by Guerci et al., (2017), Hameed et al. (2020), Beltrán-Martín and Bou-Llugar (2018), have obtained results along the same lines.

In what follows, we analyse in a crisis environment the contribution to the wellbeing of employees, of sustainable HRM applied through the implementation of responsible labour practices. First, the individual impact of each work practice is studied and then the interaction effects between these practices are analysed. The analysis of the interaction effects must allow us to analyse how the connections between the practices act and consequently assess possible synergies derived from these interactions.

3. Data and method

In our empirical analysis, the information on labour practices, the characteristics of firms, jobs and employees, and of employees' wellbeing come from the Quality of Work Life Survey conducted by the Spanish Ministry of Labour in 2010, the central year of the last great global economic and financial crisis. Therefore, the results allow us to visualize the specific impact of labour management on employee wellbeing in a central context of crisis. The results of the study may also be particularly useful in the current context of economic crisis resulting from the coronavirus pandemic. The national surveys of working conditions contain a series of characteristics that make them especially useful for analysis, and therefore they have been used in previous studies (Celma et al. 2014; Celma et al. 2018, Felstead and Henseke, 2017; Martínez-García et al. 2018; Sánchez-Sellero and Sánchez-Sellero, 2016, Tynes et al. 2017).

From the representative sample of Spanish employees, we have selected those aged 16 or above in Catalonia, Spain, which is the autonomous community with the largest number of employees (n=1,346). This area is one of the most industrialized and economically developed regions, and it has been severely affected by the economic consequences of the last financial crisis that began in 2008.

For the employees' wellbeing, consistent with previous research, we have considered the following factors: happiness-related wellbeing (job satisfaction), health-related wellbeing (job stress), and social wellbeing (trust in management). Table 1 and Table 2 offers their descriptive statistics.

Table 1 and Table 2

In the case of the variables "trust in managers" and "job satisfaction", the values between 0 and 4 have been grouped to obtain frequencies more in line with those of the other values.

The explanatory variables included in the estimation are the responsible HRM practices (Table 3). They provide information on the dimensions of the quality of work and responsible labour practices in accordance with the SDGs (United Nations, 2015) and with the bodies that define CSR, mentioned in the previous section. At the time of incorporating these variables into the model, they are dichotomized in case they were not originally so structured. The objective of the dichotomisation is twofold; on the one hand, it serves to homogenize the interpretation between the practices measured numerically and those measured qualitatively, while on the other hand, it helps to reduce the number of variable products required in the case of qualitative variables. In this study, we chose to apply the median as a criterion for cutting the variable, consistent with an approach that has already been used in other studies, such as Maxwell and Delaney (1993), where the variables were dichotomised.

Table 3

In addition to HRM practices, the models include ten variables used to control for the company, employee, and workplace characteristics (Table 4).

Table 4

4. Results

An ordered logit model is estimated for “trust in management” and for “job stress” (the two are discrete variables) and a regression model for the continuous variable “job satisfaction” (satisfaction was constructed as a composite variable of 17 variables related to satisfaction in different aspects such as: work organisation, promotion possibilities, assessment of superiors, activity carried out, personal development, autonomy and independence, level of participation, motivation, working hours, flexibility of timetables, rest periods during the working day, holidays and leave, job stability, health and safety, training provided by the company, salary and social benefits). In the case of the continuous variable of satisfaction, we proceeded to group it because the 4 lower levels of score only added up to 4% of the total cases analyzed. For each wellbeing variable, three models are constructed: the first one incorporates only the control variables; the second one adds the main effects of HHRR practices, and the third one adds the interactions between HHRR practices. The model with interactions includes variables that

are the product of others, whose moderating effect is of theoretical interest, or that we wish to test (Wall and Wood, 2005). The hypothesis of the existence of moderation is confirmed when the β associated with the product of variables is statistically significant. The analysis of the interaction effects must allow us to analyze how the connections between the practices act, and consequently to evaluate possible positive or negative synergies derived from these interactions. Below are the different tables with the models applied to the three dependent variables. As a previous step to the construction of the models, we perform a Pearson correlation analysis, which indicates that there are no multicollinearity problems among the explanatory variables.

For the case of satisfaction, the nested model test between the first control-only model and the second model adding fixed effects is statistically significant, and also the nested model test between the second model and the third model adding interaction terms is statistically significant. Table 5 show the results of the estimation with controls, main effects and interaction effects between pairs of practices ($R^2 = 0.38$ and corrected $R^2 = 0.34$).

Table 5

The results indicate that the variables negatively associated with job satisfaction are those denoting the following: being a low-salary employee, having little seniority in the company (less than one year), being a foreigner/immigrant, being a male, being over 55 years old and being a base employee.

Concerning job practices, job satisfaction is positively associated with employees receiving social benefits and training, having a permanent contract, good information and internal communication in the company, low levels of discrimination and harassment at work, and good environmental workplace conditions that favour health and safety at work.

When interaction effects are also taken into account, it is observed that some practices have a positive effect on satisfaction, but there are no positive or negative effects on satisfaction from their interaction with others. This is the case for training and information practices. Among the positive interaction effects, receiving social benefits has a greater effect on job satisfaction if combined with measures associated with work-life balance

(such as obtaining employee leave) or with profit-sharing as part of remuneration, although when applied separately, the latter two measures do not affect job satisfaction. The combination of remuneration and work-life balance practices also generates positive interaction effects on job satisfaction while they have no effect when applied separately.

As regards the negative interaction effects, when the employee has a permanent contract, the non-perception of discrimination and harassment and the receipt of social benefits have less effect than when the contract is temporary. In addition, if the environmental workplace conditions are not good, receiving social benefits contributes more to increasing job satisfaction.

For the case of job stress, the nested model test between the first control-only model and the second model adding fixed effects is statistically significant, while the nested model test between the second model and the third model adding interaction terms is not statistically significant. Thus, the second model (controls and main effects) is selected (Table 6. Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.10$ and McFadden $R^2 = 0.02$).

Table 6

The results indicate that the variables associated with greater job stress are those denoting the following: being an employee with a management position, having higher remuneration, being under 55 years old, having seniority in the company, being Spanish and being a woman. Among the labour practices, only those related to occupational health and safety (good environmental workplace conditions), work-life balance and non-discrimination (due to maternity leave) help to reduce job stress.

Finally, for the case of trust in management, the nested model test between the first control-only model and the second model adding fixed effects is statistically significant, and also the nested model test between the second model and the third model adding interaction terms is statistically significant. (controls, main effects and interaction effects). Table 7 shows the results of the estimation with controls, main effects and interaction effects between pairs of practice (Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.27$ and McFadden $R^2 = 0.08$).

Table 7

Being employed in the industrial sector and being between 25 and 55 years old decreases the trust in the management, while the employees of the micro enterprises have more confidence. For employment practices, only having a permanent contract and not experiencing discrimination due to maternity leave contribute to increased trust in management. In the case of interaction effects, non-discrimination due to maternity leave has a greater positive effect if combined with measures for work-life balance, such as obtaining employee leave; the combination of obtaining employee leave and no prolongation of time work is also an incentive for trust in management, as the company is seen to contribute to improving the work-life balance. In addition, a combination of work-life balance (such as no prolongation of time work) and non-discrimination measures also increases the trust in management. On the other hand, non-discrimination due to maternity leave or work-life balance measures, such as obtaining employee leave, only add to trust in management when the contract is temporary. Permanent contracts alone are sufficient to generate a high level of trust in management and it is not necessary for these workers to add other actions, such as non-discrimination or work-life balance measures. Finally, training measures combined with internal information and communication do not seem to be a good driver of trust in management.

Conclusions and discussion

The implementation of sustainable HRM is a way to contribute to human development and social capital within organizations (Ehnert, 2011, Kramar, 2014; Jang and Ardichvili, 2020) and to sustainable development goals, especially in times of economic crises that generate negative effects on people's general wellbeing and on their more specific wellbeing in the workplace.

This study contributes to the knowledge of the impact of sustainable HRM on the wellbeing of employees, generating information on which areas of socially responsible labour action are most effective in improving each of the dimensions of wellbeing in times of crisis. Likewise, in line with Boon et al. (2019), it contributes to the relatively limited knowledge available on the interactions and possible synergies between socially responsible labour practices. All this information is of interest not only to academia but also and especially to the companies' CEO's and HRM departments engaged in the decision-making process required in the present times of crisis adjustment. It is also of

interest for governments and social agents responsible for regulating and generating economic and social pacts in the field of employment.

Note that unlike previous crises, in the current crisis caused by COVID-19, some states are implementing some measures to avoid large-scale layoffs, the destruction of many jobs, and the disappearance of companies. However, large public spending amounts would be required and it would be very difficult to keep them in the medium and long term. In Spain, the first data of the crisis were historically disturbing. In the first month of the "State of Alarm" (registered in the State Employment Service, SEPE), 833,979 jobs were destroyed, 1,5 million of self-employed applied for benefits after the closure of their businesses and more than 3.5 million workers were affected by Temporary Employment Regulation Files (ERTEs) (Fernández, 2020; Llorente, 2020).

Despite attempts by governments to maintain the wellbeing of workers, in periods of economic crisis, there is considerable loss of jobs, while at the same time, there is a significant loss of worker employability, which translates into a difficulty in finding another workplace (Teague and Roche, 2014). This places us, once again, in familiar scenarios of economic crisis, where job stability, among other HRM practices that positively affect employee wellbeing, is once again a relevant aspect.

In light of the results obtained in this study, to answer the three research questions posed, it can be stated that the wellbeing of employees is positively affected by the adoption of CSR measures in HRM, as has been shown in previous studies (Beltrán-Martín and Bou-Llusar, 2018; Celma et al, 2016, 2018; Guerci et al., 2017; MacDuffie, 1995). Likewise, regarding the different typologies of interactions between practices (Delery, 1988), some combinations of socially responsible labour practices have been found to be effective in improving the wellbeing of employees in times of crisis, while others have no effect or negative effects.

This study has reached three main conclusions, which correspond to three results: the generic importance of socially responsible labour practices related to personal quality of life, the specific effect of practices on employee involvement, and the importance of job stability in time of crisis. Taking into account the individual results of the work practices, it seems that the practices linked to areas related to the quality of personal life (such as facilitating work-life balance, preventing non-discrimination and ensuring health and safety at work) affect more generally the employee wellbeing and especially job stress

(for job stress, no interaction effects are observed, and only these practices generate positive effects). Furthermore, the analysis of interaction effects revealed that the specific combination of work-life balance practices with non-discrimination and harassment generate between them positive interaction effects that increase trust in management. In addition, when applied with social benefits, the measures of work-life balance and occupational health generate positive synergies on job satisfaction. Occupational health and work-life balance are particularly relevant at this time, in which these aspects are being currently damaged by the crisis generated by COVID 19. One case that has affected many workers is the improvised and forced substitution of face-to-face work with teleworking. Working in a family environment has increased the stress of employees, who cannot reconcile their personal and professional lives. They are forced to work in environments with noise, lack of peace and quiet, and with work overload and longer working hours. The results obtained in this analysis show the importance of these areas of social responsibility in HRM for the wellbeing of employees. Businesses, social partners and governments should therefore take action in this regard.

On the other hand, working practices related to employee involvement in the company (such as training, internal information and communication, profit-sharing and variable or mixed remuneration) only seem to have significant effects on job satisfaction (but not on job stress and trust in management). These results are reinforced if the interaction effects of some of these practices are analysed, as variable remuneration and profit sharing generate positive synergies to increase satisfaction if they are also combined with social benefits. However, training and internal information and communication do not generate synergies with any other practice to improve job satisfaction.

Finally, having a permanent contract is particularly important for emotional wellbeing (job satisfaction) and social wellbeing (trust in management). Likewise, the results of the interaction effects show that other socially responsible labour practices, such as social benefits, non-discrimination or work-life balance, are especially relevant for workers with temporary contracts. This result is especially important in times of economic crisis, as there are very high unemployment rates and difficulties in finding new employment. The permanent contract offers job stability and guaranteed salary, resulting in the wellbeing of the employee, who seems to attach great importance to it.

Companies and human resources departments should focus on achieving sustainable enterprises by applying HRM strategies and practices that improve the quality of work in all areas and that not only contribute positively to the competitiveness of enterprises but also to the sustainable growth of a country (European Commission, 2011). Efforts must be even greater in times of crisis. HRM departments must become strategic axes for the company by adapting their response through the application of those policies and practices whose impact is most positive for employees and the company. In this sense, according to the results obtained in this study, organizations should focus on the application of practices that guarantee job stability, training to ensure the adaptation to new working environments, good internal communication, good environmental workplace conditions and work-life balance measures. Despite the crisis, avoiding work overload, maintaining the number of social benefits that complement remuneration, and keeping harassment and discrimination at low levels can be the key to succeeding in the current crisis through the employment of workers with higher levels of wellbeing.

At the level of state regulation, as some of the socially responsible labour practices (such as health and safety at work or work-life balance) are more regulated, more attention should be paid to less regulated practices (such as the prevention of discrimination or training), and adapting these regulations to the new employment situation created by Covid-19.

In addition to considering the aspects studied in this article, the companies and governments need to take into account other sustainable HRM facets, such as the promotion of wellbeing and healthy living, the promotion of opportunities for continuous training, gender equality and the empowerment of women, full employment and decent work and the reduction of the wage gap, which are becoming increasingly important. These aspects deserve further research.

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Table 1. Descriptive wellbeing discrete variables

Descriptive wellbeing variables				
	Trust in Management		Job Stress	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0			115	8.5
1			39	2.9
2			48	3.6
3			49	3.6
4	108 (≤ 4)	8.2 (≤ 4)	54	4
5	106	8.0	178	13.2
6	129	9.7	166	12.3
7	256	19.3	222	16.5
8	328	24.8	227	16.9
9	194	14.7	132	9.8
10	203	15.3	116	8.6
TOTAL	1324	100.0	1,346	100.0
Missing	22	1.6		

Table 2. Descriptive job satisfaction (continuous) variable

Value	Frequency	Percentage
[0,4]	48	3,6%
(4,5]	84	6,2%
(5-6]	164	12,2%
(6-7]	303	22,5%
(7-8]	457	34,0%
(8-9]	171	12,7%
(9-10]	119	8,84%
Total	1346	100%

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of CSR in HRM ⁽¹⁾

Explanatory variables	%	N
Remuneration Practices		
Number of social benefits (1)		
No benefits (<i>number of benefits</i> ≤ <i>median</i>)	44.2	595
Yes benefits (<i>number of benefits</i> > <i>median</i>)	55.8	751
Type of remuneration		
Fixed	89.2	1,201
Variable or mixed	10.8	145
Participation in profits		
No profit sharing	86.0	1,157
Yes profit sharing	14.0	189
Hiring practices		
Type of contract		
Temporary	17.1	230
Permanent	82.9	1,116
Workload and work-life balance practices		
Difficulty obtaining leave		
Difficulty (> <i>median</i>)	48.9	658
Difficulty (< <i>median</i>)	51.1	688
Prolonged working hours		
Always or half a day	22.8	307
Never or occasionally	77.2	1,039
Occupational health and safety practices		
Environmental workplace conditions		
Bad conditions (≤ <i>median</i>)	52.5	707
Good conditions (> <i>median</i>)	47.5	639
Training practices		
Training provided by the company		
No or do not know	51.4	692
Receive training	48.6	654
Information/communication practices		
Internal information		
Low level of knowledge (<i>information</i> ≤ <i>median</i>)	60.3	811
High level of knowledge (<i>information</i> > <i>median</i>)	39.7	535
Equal opportunity and non-discrimination practices		
Discrimination-Harassment		
Perception of Discrimination and harassment (> <i>median</i>)	38.0	511
Perception of Discrimination and harassment (< <i>median</i>)	62.0	835
Maternity leave harms the professional career		
It negatively affects your career	19.5	262

Does not affect career or affects it positively	80.5	1,084
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Total Sample		1,346
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In parentheses next to the corresponding category, the dichotomization in relation to the median is indicated.

(1) The variable number of social benefits is made up of the following benefits: housing benefits, pension plans or pension supplements, training benefits, employee canteen or maintenance benefits, transportation benefits, benefits for health care expenses, benefits for the education of the worker's children or relatives, day care centres for children or day care benefits, leisure offers, other social services.

Table 4. Control variables: company, personal and workplace characteristics

Control variables	%	N
Characteristics of the company		
Industry type		
Primary sector	6.3	85
Manufacturing	21.4	288
Services	72.3	973
Company size		
Micro (1 to 10 workers)	20.8	280
SMEs (11 to 250 employees)	42.8	576
Large (> 250 employees)	36.4	490
Professional situation		
Public sector employee	22.4	301
Private sector employee	77.6	1,045
Personal characteristics		
Age (in years)		
<25	4.8	64
25-55	80.8	1,088
>55	14.4	194
Gender		
Woman	51.5	693
Man	48.5	653
Level of education		
No studies/primary education	13.5	182
Secondary education	55.2	743
University education	31.3	421
Birthplace		
Catalonia	69.3	933
Rest of Spain	18.4	247
Immigrant	12.3	166
Workplace characteristics		
Professional Category		
Staff	80.2	1,079
Manager (first and intermediate positions)	19.8	267
Seniority in the firm		
<1 year	16.3	219
1-5 years	27.2	366
>5 years	56.5	761
Month salary after tax		
Low salary (<2,100 euros)	49.5	666
High salary (>2,101)	50.5	680
Total Sample		1,346

Table 5. Results of the regression model on job satisfaction (controls, main effects and moderating effects)

Controls	Estimation	s.e.	Wald	p-value
Industry type:				
Primary sector	-0,19	0,15	1,51	0,21
Manufacturing	-0,14	0,12	1,36	0,24
Services	0(a)			
Company size:				
Micro (1 to 10 workers)	-0,22	0,13	2,79	0,09
SMEs (11 to 250 employees)	-0,12	0,10	1,41	0,23
Large (> 250 employees)	0(a)	.	.	.
Professional situation:				
Public sector employee	-0,08	0,12	0,53	0,46
Private sector employee	0(a)	.	.	.
Age (in years)				
<25	0,51	0,24	4,37	0,03
25-55	0,43	0,13	10,66	0,00*
>55	0(a)			
Gender:				
Woman	0,39	0,09	15,64	0,00*
Man	0(a)			
Level of education:				
No studies/primary education	0,09	0,16	0,30	0,57
Secondary education	0,12	0,11	1,19	0,27
University education	0(a)	.	.	.
Birthplace:				
Catalonia	0,20	0,13	2,16	0,14
Rest of Spain	0,43	0,16	6,87	0,00*
Immigrant	0(a)			
Professional Category:				
Staff	-0,62	0,12	26,92	0,00*
Management (and middle management)	0(a)			
Seniority in the firm:				
< 1 year	-0,32	0,13	5,87	0,01*
1-5 years	-0,17	0,11	2,41	0,12
> 5 years	0(a)	.	.	.
Month salary after tax				
Low salary (<2,100 euros)	-0,37	0,11	11,21	0,00*
High salary (>2,101)	0(a)			
<hr/>				
Main Effects	Estimation	s.e.	t-values	p-value
Number of social benefits	0,81	0,29	2,76	0,00*
Variable remuneration	-0,10	0,37	-0,26	0,79
Profit sharing	0,33	0,43	0,76	0,44
Permanent contract	0,82	0,3	2,75	0,00*

Internal information >median	1.08	0.31	3.42	0.00*
Training practices	0.64	0.29	2.16	0.03*
Good environmental workplace conditions	0.58	0.27	2.17	0.03*
Low perception of discrimination and harassment (Harassment)	0.94	0.26	3.59	0.00*
No Prolongation of time work	-0,06	0,27	-0,23	0,81
Facility permits ≤median	-0,19	0,26	-0,75	0,45
Maternity does not affect career	0,43	0,28	1,53	0,12
<hr/>				
Moderating Effects	Estimation	s.e.	t-values	p-value
<hr/>				
Maternity does not affect career x Number of soc.benefits>median	-0,19	0,17	-1,10	0,26
<hr/>				
Maternity does not affect career x No prolongation of time work	-0,05	0,19	-0,30	0,76
<hr/>				
Maternity does not affect career x Difficulty obtaining leave	0,23	0,16	1,40	0,16
<hr/>				
Maternity does not affect career x Environmental workplace cond.	0,11	0,17	0,65	0,51
<hr/>				
Maternity does not affect career x Information>median	0,00	0,18	0,00	0,99
<hr/>				
Non-discrimination due to maternity x Perception of discrimination and harassment	0,03	0,16	0,21	0,83
<hr/>				
Maternity does not affect career x Variable remuneration	-0,12	0,26	-0,47	0,63
<hr/>				
Maternity does not affect career x Profit sharing	-0,10	0,25	-0,39	0,69
<hr/>				
Maternity does not affect career x Permanent contract	0,23	0,21	1,08	0,28
<hr/>				
Maternity does not affect career x Training	-0,05	0,17	-0,29	0,76
<hr/>				
Number of soc. benef.>median x No prolongation of time work	0,00	0,18	0,03	0,96
<hr/>				
Number of soc. benef. x Ease obtaining leave	0.35	0.14	2.49	0.01*
<hr/>				
Number of soc. benef.>median x environmental cond.	-0,36	0,14	-2,59	0,01*
<hr/>				
Number of soc. benef.>median x Information>median	-0,07	0,15	-0,48	0,62
<hr/>				
Number soc. benef.>median x Harassment<median	0,15	0,14	1,04	0,29
<hr/>				
Number of soc. benef.>median x Variable remuneration	-0,01	0,23	-0,08	0,93
<hr/>				
Number of soc. benef. x Profit share	0.42	0.21	1.98	0.04*
<hr/>				
Number of soc. benef.>median x Permanent contract	-0,46	0,19	-2,39	0,01*

Number of grants>medium x Training	0,05	0,14	0,37	0,70
No prolongation of time work x Facility permits	0,27	0,16	1,66	0,09
No prolongation of time work x Environmental Cond.≤median	0,11	0,15	0,74	0,45
No prolongation of time work x Information>median	-0,09	0,16	-0,61	0,54
No overtime x Harassment<median	0,14	0,15	0,88	0,37
No prolongation of time work x Variable remuneration	0,51	0,23	2,23	0,02*
No prolongation of time work x Profit sharing	0,00	0,21	0,00	0,99
No overtime x Indefinite contract	-0,15	0,21	-0,72	0,46
No overtime x Training	0,08	0,17	0,49	0,62
Difficulty obtaining leave ≤median x Environmental cond>median	-0,04	0,13	-0,31	0,75
Difficulty obtaining leave ≤median x Information	0,20	0,13	1,50	0,13
Difficulty obtaining leave ≤median x Harassment<median	-0,06	0,13	-0,46	0,64
Difficulty obtaining leave ≤median x Variable remuneration	0,35	0,22	1,58	0,11
Difficulty obtaining leave ≤median x Profit sharing	0,02	0,19	0,11	0,90
Difficulty obtaining leave ≤median x Permanent contract	0,01	0,17	0,08	0,93
Difficulty obtaining leave ≤median x Training	-0,26	0,13	-1,89	0,05
Environmental conditions>median x Information>median	0,16	0,13	1,23	0,21
Environmental conditions>median x Harassment<median	-0,05	0,13	-0,39	0,69
Environmental conditions>median x Variable compensation	-0,26	0,22	-1,18	0,23
Environmental conditions>median x Profit sharing	-0,13	0,18	-0,70	0,47
Environmental conditions>median x Permanent contract	-0,01	0,18	-0,08	0,92
Environmental conditions>median x Training	0,01	0,13	0,10	0,91
Information>median x Harassment<median	-0,11	0,14	-0,77	0,43
Information>median x Variable remuneration	0,09	0,23	0,41	0,68
Information>median x Profit sharing	0,30	0,19	1,60	0,10
Information>median x Permanent contract	-0,37	0,20	-1,84	0,06

Information>median x Training	-0,24	0,14	-1,69	0,09
Harassment<median x Variable compensation	-0,21	0,22	-0,95	0,34
Harassment<median x Profit Sharing	-0,00	0,19	-0,02	0,97
Harassment<median x Permanent contract	-0,55	0,19	-2,90	0,00*
Harassment<median x Training	-0,24	0,14	-1,68	0,09
Variable remuneration x Profit sharing	0,01	0,27	0,06	0,95
Variable remuneration x Permanent contract	-0,05	0,25	-0,20	0,83
Variable remuneration x Training	-0,06	0,22	-0,29	0,76
Profit sharing x Permanent contract	-0,45	0,33	-1,37	0,16
Profit sharing x Training	0,03	0,19	0,19	0,84
Permanent contract x Training	-0,00	0,18	-0,02	0,97

* p<0.05

(a) Reference Category

Table 6. Results of the ordinal logit model on job stress (controls and main effects)

Controls	Estimation	s.e.	Wald	p-value
Activity sector:				
Agriculture, fishing and construction	-0,19	0,15	1,51	0,21
Industry	-0,14	0,12	1,36	0,24
Services	0(a)	.	.	.
Company size:				
Micro-company	-0,22	0,13	2,79	0,09
SMEs	-0,12	0,10	1,41	0,23
Large	0(a)	.	.	.
Professional situation:				
Public	-0,08	0,12	0,53	0,46
Private	0(a)	.	.	.
Age:				
<25 years	0.51	0.24	4.37	0.03*
25-55 years	0.43	0.13	10.66	0.00*
>55 years	0(a)	.	.	.
Gender:				
Woman	0.39	0.09	15.64	0.00*
Man	0(a)	.	.	.
Level of studies:				
No studies / primary	0.09	0.16	0.30	0.57
Secondary / FP	0.12	0.11	1.19	0.27
University	0(a)	.	.	.
Birthplace:				
Catalonia	0.20	0.13	1.16	0.14
Rest of Spain	0.43	0.67	6.87	0.00*
Foreign	0(a)	.	.	.
Professional Category:				
Staff	-0.62	0.12	26.92	0.00*
Management (and middle management)				
	0(a)	.	.	.
Seniority in the firm:				
< 1 year	-0.32	0.13	5.87	0.01*
1-5 years	-0,17	0,11	2,41	0,12
> 5 years	0(a)	.	.	.
Monthly Salary level:				
Low salary	-0.37	0.11	11.21	0.00*
High salary	0(a)	.	.	.
<hr/>				
Main Effects	Estimation	s.e.	Wald	p-value.
Number of social benefits	0.09	0.11	0.80	0.37
Variable remuneration	0.11	0.15	0.50	0.47
Profit sharing	0.27	0.14	3.69	0.05

Permanent contract	-0.05	0.15	0.11	0.73
Information >median	-0.07	0.10	0.56	0.45
Training	0.07	0.11	0.43	0.50
Good environmental workplace conditions	-0.29	0.10	8.27	0.00*
Low perception of discrimination and harassment (Harassment)	-0.19	0.10	3.57	0.06
No Prolongation of time work	-0.59	0.11	24.94	0.00*
Facility permits ≤median	-0.14	0.10	2.17	0.14
Non-discrimination due to maternity leave	-0.4	0.12	10.42	0.00*

* p<0.05

(a) Reference Category

Table 7. Results of the ordinal logit model on trust in management (controls, main effects and moderating effects).

Controls	Estimation	s.e.	Wald	p-value
Industry type				
Primary sector	-0.12	0.16	0.64	0.42
Manufacturing	-0.35	0.12	8.35	0.00*
Services	0(a)			
Company size:				
Micro (1 to 10 workers)	0.75	0.13	29.78	0.00*
SMEs (11 to 250 employees)	0.18	0.10	2.81	0.09
Large (> 250 employees)	0(a)	.	.	.
Professional situation:				
Public sector employee	0.05	0.12	0.22	0.63
Private sector employee	0(a)	.	.	.
Age (in years)				
<25	-0.14	0.25	0.32	0.56
25-55	-0.28	0.13	4.30	0.03*
>55	0(a)			
Gender:				
Woman	-0.08	0.10	0.68	0.40
Man	0(a)			
Level of education:				
No studies/primary education	0.05	0.16	0.12	0.72
Secondary education	0.01	0.11	0.01	0.91
University education	0(a)	.	.	.
Birthplace:				
Catalonia	-0.03	0.14	0.04	0.82
Rest of Spain	-0.22	0.17	1.73	0.18
Immigrant	0(a)			
Professional Category:				
Staff	-0.22	0.12	3.38	0.06
Manager (first and intermediate positions)	0(a)			
Seniority in the firm:				
< 1 year	0.14	0.13	1.11	0.29
1-5 years	-0.06	0.11	0.35	0.55
> 5 years	0(a)	.	.	.
Month salary after tax:				
Low salary (<2,100 euros)	-0.20	0.11	3.21	0.07
High salary (>2,101)	0(a)			
<hr/>				
Main Effects	Estimation	s.e	Wald	p-value
Number of social benefits	0.49	0.47	1.09	0.29
Variable remuneration	0.64	0.62	1.04	0.30
Profit sharing	0.52	0.70	0.56	0.45
Permanent contract	1.81	0.48	13.76	0.00*
Information >median	0.59	0.50	1.39	0.23
Training	0.35	0.47	0.55	0.45

Good environmental workplace conditions	0.79	0.43	3.37	0.06
Low perception of discrimination and harassment (Harassment)	0.15	0.42	0.12	0.72
No prolongation of time work	0.30	0.45	0.47	0.49
Facility permits \leq median	0.28	0.42	0.44	0.50
Non-discrimination due to maternity leave	0.94	0.45	4.36	0.03*

Moderating Effects	Estimation	s.e.	Wald	p-value
Maternity does not affect career x Number of soc.benefits>median	0.08	0.28	0.08	0.76
Maternity does not affect career x No prolongation of time work	-0.53	0.31	2.94	0.08
Maternity does not affect career x Easy obtaining employee leave	0,74	0,26	8,09	0,00*
Maternity does not affect career x Environmental Cond.	0.12	0.27	0.21	0.64
Maternity does not affect career x Information>median	0.23	0.28	0.66	0.41
Maternity does not affect career x Harassment	0.42	0.26	2.54	0.11
Maternity does not affect career x Variable remuneration	-0.69	0.42	2.60	0.10
Maternity does not affect career x Profit sharing	0.32	0.40	0.64	0.42
Maternity does not affect career x Permanent contract	-0.91	0.34	7.09	0.00*
Maternity does not affect career x Training	0.04	0.28	0.02	0.88
Number of soc. benef.>median x No prolongation of time work	0.08	0.29	0.08	0.77
Number of soc. benef. x Easy obtaining employee leave	0.28	0.22	1.57	0.21
Number of soc. benef.>median x environmental cond.	-0.07	0.22	0.09	0.75
Number of soc. benef.>median x Information>median	0.37	0.24	2.40	0.12
Number soc. benef.>median x Harassment<median	-0.25	0.23	1.21	0.27
Number of soc. benef.>median x Variable remuneration	0.06	0.37	0.03	0.85
Number of soc. benef. x Profit share	-0.16	0.34	0.23	0.62
Number of soc. benef.>median x Permanent contract	-0.14	0.31	0.21	0.64
Number of grants>medium x Training	-0.34	0.22	2.33	0.12

No prolongation of time work x Easy obtaining employee leave	0,51	0,26	3,91	0,04*
No prolongation of time work x Environmental Cond.≤median	0,35	0,25	1,94	0,16
No prolongation of time work x Information>median	0,21	0,26	0,67	0,41
No Prolongation of time work x Harassment<median	0,58	0,25	5,35	0,02*
No prolongation of time work x Variable remuneration	0.40	0.37	1.14	0.28
No prolongation of time work x Profit sharing	-0.59	0.34	2.97	0.08
No Prolongation of time work x Indefinite contract	-0.49	0.35	1.96	0.16
No Prolongation of time work x Training	0.00	0.28	0.00	0.99
Easy obtaining employee leave ≤median x Environmental cond>median	-0.19	0.21	0.78	0.37
Easy obtaining employee leave ≤median x Information	0.12	0.22	0.32	0.56
Easy obtaining employee leave ≤median x Harassment<median	0.16	0.21	0.53	0.46
Easy obtaining employee leave ≤median x Variable remuneration	0.58	0.37	2.43	0.11
Easy obtaining employee leave ≤median x Profit sharing	0.20	0.31	0.41	0.52
Easy obtaining employee leave ≤median x Permanent contract	-0.70	0.28	6.06	0.01*
Easy obtaining employee leave ≤median x Training	-0.24	0.22	1.23	0.26
Environmental conditions>median x Information>median	0.19	0.21	0.79	0.37
Environmental conditions>median x Harassment<median	-0.24	0.21	1.21	0.27
Environmental conditions>median x Variable compensation	0.14	0.35	0.16	0.68
Environmental conditions>median x Profit sharing	-0.40	0.30	1.80	0.18
Environmental conditions>median x Permanent contract	-0.22	0.29	0.57	0.44
Environmental conditions>median x Training	-0.16	0.22	0.53	0.46
Information>median x Harassment<median	0.02	0.23	0.01	0.91
Information>median x Variable remuneration	-0.25	0.38	0.43	0.51
Information>median x Profit sharing	0.23	0.31	0.58	0.44
Information>median x Permanent contract	-0.05	0.33	0.02	0.87
Information>median x Training	-0.75	0.23	10.81	0.00*

Harassment<median x Variable compensation	0.20	0.36	0.31	0.57
Harassment<median x Profit Sharing	0.29	0.30	0.92	0.33
Harassment<median x Permanent contract	-0.14	0.30	0.22	0.63
Harassment<median x Training	0.08	0.22	0.14	0.70
Variable remuneration x Profit sharing	0.23	0.45	0.27	0.60
Variable remuneration x Permanent contract	-0.81	0.43	3.51	0.06
Variable remuneration x Training	-0.34	0.37	0.84	0.36
Profit sharing x Permanent contract	-0.22	0.52	0.19	0.66
Profit sharing x Training	-0.24	0.32	0.56	0.45
Permanent contract x Training	0.37	0.30	1.49	0.22

* p<0.05

(a) Reference Category