AFRICAN JOURNAL OF HOSPITALITY, TOURISM AND LEISURE
2026, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 398-407
https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.748

AJHTL
OPEN ACCESS

Research article

Understanding presenteeism and employee withdrawal in hotels and travel agencies: Do emotional exhaustion and resilience matter?

Hazem Ahmed Khairy [1], Wagih M. E. Salama* [2], Mohamed Ahmed Suliman [2] and Mohamed Hani Abd- ElHady [3]

[1] Hotel Management Department, Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, University of Sadat City, Sadat City, Egypt
[2] Department of Social Studies, College of Arts, King Faisal University, Al-Ahsa, Saudi Arabia.
[3] Tourism Studies Department, AlAlson High Institute for Tourism and Hotels, Egypt.

ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between presenteeism and psychological withdrawal among full-time employees in five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies, focusing on the mediating role of emotional exhaustion and the moderating role of psychological resilience. Grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, data from 420 valid responses were analyzed. The findings indicate that presenteeism significantly increases both emotional exhaustion and psychological withdrawal, while emotional exhaustion also positively influences withdrawal behaviors. Moreover, emotional exhaustion partially mediates the relationship between presenteeism and psychological withdrawal, highlighting its role as a key underlying mechanism. Importantly, psychological resilience moderates the effect of presenteeism on emotional exhaustion, demonstrating its buffering role against resource depletion. These results support the JD-R and COR frameworks and underscore the importance of enhancing employee resilience to sustain well-being, organizational effectiveness, and service quality in high-pressure hospitality and tourism environments.

KEYWORDS

Presenteeism, psychological Withdrawal; emotional exhaustion; psychological resilience; hotel and tourism enterprises.

Introduction

The hospitality industry is marked by high customer expectations, long working hours, and demanding emotional labor, making hotel employees especially vulnerable to workplace stressors (Dlamini et al., 2017; Khairy et al., 2023; Alghamdi et al., 2024). Among the behavioral and psychological outcomes of such stressors, presenteeism and psychological withdrawal have received increasing scholarly attention. Presenteeism refers to employees attending work despite being physically or mentally unwell, often compromising both well-being and productivity (Zakeri et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2025). Psychological withdrawal, in contrast, involves mentally disengaging from work while remaining physically present—manifesting as reduced effort, daydreaming, or neglecting responsibilities (Balaji, 2022; Tong et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2025). Emotional exhaustion, a core component of burnout, arises when employees' emotional and cognitive resources are depleted due to excessive job demands, workload, or presenteeism (Yang, 2023; Hernández et al., 2024). It not only diminishes work engagement (Chiwawa & Wissink, 2021) but also acts as a key mechanism linking presenteeism to psychological withdrawal. Employees suffering from emotional exhaustion often struggle to maintain performance and are more likely to mentally disengage from their tasks (Chin et al., 2024; Hernández et al., 2024). Psychological resilience, defined as an individual's capacity to cope with and adapt to stress or hardship, functions as a critical personal resource that mitigates the negative effects of workplace stressors (Pasha et al., 2025; Dalmış et al., 2024). Employees with high resilience are better equipped to handle the pressures associated with presenteeism, potentially preventing emotional

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR'S CONTACT: Wagih M. E. Salama ✉ welsayed@kfu.edu.sa
HOW TO CITE: Khairy, H.A., Salama, W.M.W., Suliman, M.A. & Abd-AlHady, M.H. (2026). Understanding presenteeism and employee withdrawal in hotels and travel agencies: Do emotional exhaustion and resilience matter? African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 15(2), 398-407. https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.748.

ISSN: 2223-814X (Online) | © 2026 AJHTL

This work is published by African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure and is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Open Rubric

exhaustion from escalating into psychological withdrawal (Peng & Li, 2023). Despite increasing academic interest in presenteeism and psychological withdrawal, research within the hospitality sector remains limited—particularly studies exploring emotional exhaustion as a mediating factor and psychological resilience as a moderator (Matthew & Olasupo, 2023). Most existing research focuses on healthcare or general organizational contexts, overlooking the unique challenges faced by hotel employees, such as emotional labor, constant guest interaction, and irregular work schedules (Karatepe et al., 2024). This study addresses a significant gap in the literature by investigating how presenteeism leads to psychological withdrawal through the mediating role of emotional exhaustion and how psychological resilience moderates this relationship. Theoretically, it contributes to the understanding of employee behavior under stress, drawing on the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory. Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for hotel and tourism managers, enabling them to design targeted interventions that enhance employee well-being, reduce withdrawal behaviors, and sustain service quality in high-pressure work environments. Table (1) below summarizes the key constructs and their roles in the study

Table 1. Summary of key constructs and their roles in the study

Construct	Definition	Role in the Study	Theoretical Basis	References
Presenteeism	Attending work while physically or mentally unwell, often at the expense of productivity and health.	Independent Variable (Predictor) — Increases emotional exhaustion and psychological withdrawal.	JD-R Model, COR Theory	Zakeri et al. (2024); Zhang et al. (2025)
Emotional Exhaustion	A state of being emotionally drained and depleted due to prolonged job demands or stress.	Mediator — Explains the mechanism by which presenteeism leads to psychological withdrawal.	JD-R Model, COR Theory	Yang (2023); Hernández et al. (2024); Chin et al. (2024); Hernández et al. (2024)
Psychological Withdrawal	Mental disengagement from work while being physically present, such as daydreaming or reduced effort.	Dependent Variable (Outcome) — Resulting from presenteeism and emotional exhaustion.	JD-R Model	Balaji (2022); Tong et al. (2023); Xu et al. (2025)
Psychological Resilience	The ability to adapt to and recover from stress or hardship.	Moderator — Buffers the negative impact of presenteeism on emotional exhaustion.	COR Theory	Pasha et al. (2025); Dalmış et al. (2024); Peng & Li (2023)

Hypotheses development: Underpinning theories

Job demands-resources model (JD-R)

In the JD-R model, higher demands and performance-based incentives (e.g., commissions) are viewed as key determinants influencing employees' psychological well-being, motivation, and job performance. Every occupation involves specific job demands—such as workload, time pressure, or emotional strain—and job resources, including autonomy, social support, and constructive feedback. While excessive demands typically lead to strain and emotional exhaustion, job resources foster engagement, intrinsic motivation, and improved performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Recent research trends have expanded the JD-R model by incorporating personal resources—such as psychological resilience, self-efficacy, and mindfulness—highlighting their role in buffering the negative effects of high job demands and enhancing the motivational process (Lesener et al., 2020; Mazzetti et al., 2022). The JD-R framework has been widely and successfully applied across various sectors, including healthcare, hospitality, education, and remote work, confirming its relevance across different cultures and organizational settings (Bakker et al., 2023).

Conservation of resources (COR) Theory

The COR theory, introduced by Hobfoll (1989), is among the most influential and widely applied frameworks for understanding stress in organizational settings. At its core, COR theory posits that individuals are motivated to acquire, maintain, and safeguard resources—defined broadly to include tangible objects, personal traits, social conditions, and forms of energy that are either inherently valuable or instrumental in achieving valued goals. Psychological stress occurs when individuals perceive a threat of resource depletion, experience actual resource loss, or fail to gain sufficient return on their resource investments (Hobfoll et al., 2018). Contemporary research grounded in COR theory has highlighted the protective role of personal resources—such as optimism, self-efficacy, and resilience—in buffering the adverse effects of emotional exhaustion and burnout. Similarly, organizational resources like autonomy, supervisor support, and a positive work climate have been shown to foster employee engagement, well-being, and performance outcomes (Halbesleben et al., 2014; Chen et al., 2023). An important theoretical evolution within COR is the notion of resource caravans, which refers to clusters of interrelated resources that accumulate and interact over time, and resource gain spirals, which describe how resource accumulation can lead to sustained positive outcomes for individuals and organizations alike (Hobfoll, 2011; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2022). These concepts provide a dynamic understanding of how employees can build resilience and thrive, particularly in resource-challenging work environments.

Presenteeism and psychological withdrawal

Presenteeism refers to the act of attending work despite illness or health issues, which poses a dual threat by negatively impacting both employee health and organizational performance (Zakeri et al., 2024; Schill et al., 2023). Its prevalence spans various sectors, including healthcare and agriculture, where it is influenced by factors such as workload, leadership style, job insecurity, safety climate, and organizational culture (Zakeri et al., 2024; Knani, 2022; Kim et al., 2023). At the individual level, presenteeism exacerbates health problems, increases fatigue, and diminishes long-term work ability, while at the organizational level it leads to decreased productivity and higher turnover intentions (Schill et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2025). Psychological withdrawal, in contrast, involves employees mentally disengaging from their work while remaining physically present. It is characterized by behaviors such as daydreaming, reduced effort, limited communication, and minimal emotional investment in work tasks (Tong et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2025). Unlike more visible forms of withdrawal like absenteeism (Mukwevho et al., 2020), psychological withdrawal is subtle but often serves as an early indicator of employee disengagement. Research suggests that presenteeism often precedes psychological withdrawal, as employees working while unwell may lack the cognitive resources and motivation to fully engage, resulting in psychological withdrawal behaviors (Schill et al., 2023; Zakeri et al., 2024). Both phenomena share antecedents such as job insecurity, heavy workloads, and insufficient organizational support, which increase employee strain and disengagement (Tong et al., 2023; Souad et al., 2025). Thus, presenteeism not only reduces immediate productivity but also increases the likelihood of psychological withdrawal, creating a cycle detrimental to individual and organizational outcomes. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Presenteeism increases psychological withdrawal.

Presenteeism and emotional exhaustion

Emotional exhaustion is a core component of burnout characterized by feelings of being emotionally overextended and depleted due to prolonged job demands exceeding one's coping capacity (Yang, 2023; Hernández et al., 2024). Presenteeism accelerates this depletion by compelling employees to work while fatigued or mentally strained, thereby exhausting their limited physical and psychological resources (Zakeri et al., 2024). Empirical evidence, especially from high-demand settings like healthcare, demonstrates that frequent presenteeism leads to increased stress and emotional exhaustion (Zhang et al., 2025). Presenteeism extends employees' exposure to job demands and reduces recovery opportunities, exacerbating emotional fatigue and setting the stage for disengagement (Schill et al., 2023). Consequently, presenteeism is both a behavioral risk factor and a predictor of emotional exhaustion, with significant implications for employee well-being and organizational sustainability. Thus, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Presenteeism increases emotional exhaustion.

Emotional exhaustion and psychological withdrawal

Emotional exhaustion depletes employees' energy and their capacity for sustained work engagement. Prolonged emotional strain fosters withdrawal behaviors such as daydreaming, reduced effort, and disengagement as employees attempt to conserve remaining psychological resources (Yang, 2023; Hernández et al., 2024). Studies across sectors, including healthcare, education, and hybrid work environments, confirm that emotional exhaustion strongly predicts psychological withdrawal (Tong et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2025). Specifically, stressors related to complex work arrangements have been shown to heighten emotional exhaustion, which then mediates the relationship between job demands and withdrawal (Hernández et al., 2024). This evidence underscores emotional exhaustion as a critical psychological mechanism propelling employees toward disengagement, thereby impairing both individual performance and organizational effectiveness. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H3: Emotional exhaustion increases psychological withdrawal.

Emotional exhaustion as a mediator

Building on its role as a precursor to psychological withdrawal, emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between presenteeism and withdrawal behaviors. Presenteeism depletes employees' emotional resources, leading to exhaustion, which in turn drives psychological withdrawal as a coping strategy (Yang, 2023; Hernández et al., 2024). This mediating effect has been observed across various occupational settings, confirming emotional exhaustion as a key mechanism linking job stressors to behavioral outcomes (Tong et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2025; Hernández et al., 2024). Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between presenteeism and psychological withdrawal.

Psychological resilience as a moderator

Psychological resilience refers to an individual's capacity to adapt effectively to stress and adversity, maintaining or quickly recovering psychological health under pressure (Pasha et al., 2025; Dalmış et al., 2025). It is linked positively with traits such as self-efficacy, positive affect, and conscientiousness, and negatively with anxiety and depressive symptoms (Fabrizio et al., 2025). Resilience helps employees manage the demands associated with presenteeism, thereby reducing the likelihood that such demands will lead to emotional exhaustion (Khairy & Mahmoud, 2022). Research shows that resilience moderates the impact of job stressors on burnout dimensions, including presenteeism-related emotional exhaustion. Specifically, the positive relationship between presenteeism and emotional exhaustion is weaker among employees with high resilience (Xu et al., 2024). This buffering effect highlights the importance of personal resources in preventing stress escalation and supports interventions aimed at strengthening resilience to promote employee well-being and sustain organizational performance. Consequently, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H5: Psychological resilience moderates the relationship between presenteeism and emotional exhaustion, such that this positive relationship is weaker when psychological resilience is high.

The theoretical framework of the study is illustrated below in Figure 1.

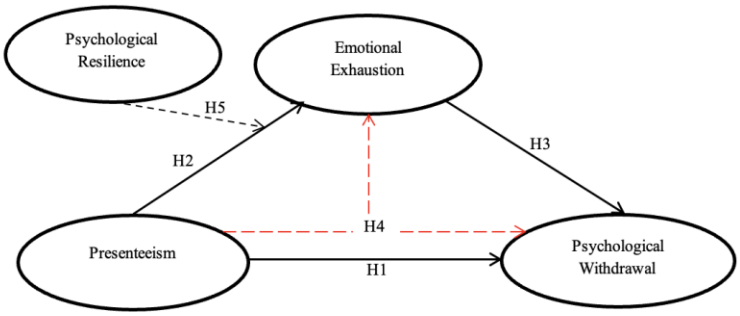

Figure 1: The theoretical framework of the study

Research methods

All measurement scales used to measure the investigated variables were adapted from previously validated instruments and contextualized for application in the hospitality and tourism industry. To evaluate employee presenteeism, a six-item scale developed by Koopman et al. (2002) was employed. Psychological withdrawal behavior (PW) was assessed using an eight-item measure originally created by Lehman & Simpson (1992). Emotional exhaustion was gauged through a validated nine-item tool, initially designed by Maslach et al. (1986) and later applied in the hospitality and tourism sector by Amissah et al. (2022). Additionally, six items from the scale by Smith et al. (2008) were used to measure employees' psychological resilience (EPR). Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The original scales, initially developed in English, were translated into Arabic using the back-translation method. This process was carried out by two bilingual experts to ensure accuracy and consistency. The final survey was administered in Arabic. This research focused on full-time employees employed in five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies situated in Egypt's Greater Cairo region. Five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies are ideal contexts for investigating presenteeism and psychological withdrawal in Egypt's tourism sector due to their high service standards, demanding work environments, and intense emotional labor requirements (Khairy, 2020). Employees in these organizations face significant pressure to maintain performance and professionalism, often leading to emotional exhaustion. These enterprises also tend to have structured HR systems and a stronger focus on employee well-being, allowing for better observation of psychological resilience as a moderating factor. As reported by the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (2022), Egypt's Greater Cairo region comprises 30 five-star hotels and 1,666 category-A travel agencies. A judgmental sampling strategy was applied to select appropriate hotels and agencies for participation. Due to logistical challenges and the wide geographic distribution, convenience sampling was then used to recruit participants directly from the selected sites. Verbal approval was obtained from each organization prior to distributing the questionnaires on their premises. In total, 420 valid responses were collected—sourced from 60 category-A travel agencies and 20 five-star hotels. At the beginning of the survey, participants were informed about the study's objectives and assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. They were also made aware that their participation was entirely voluntary,

with the freedom to withdraw at any stage of the survey process without any consequences or penalties. Completion of the survey was considered as implied consent to participate in the study. Data analysis was conducted using PLS-SEM, a statistical technique well-suited for examining complex theoretical models and appropriate for both exploratory and confirmatory research designs (Hair et al., 2016). PLS-SEM is particularly advantageous in disciplines such as strategic management and hospitality research, as it accommodates non-normal data distributions and performs effectively with small to medium sample sizes (Bari et al., 2019). In this study, WarpPLS version 8.0 was employed to evaluate both the measurement and structural components of the model.

Results

Participant's profile

Table 2 summarizes the demographics of 420 participants. Males constituted the majority (70.95%), while females accounted for 29.05%. The largest age group was 30–45 years (44.52%), followed by those under 30 (30.48%) and those over 45 (25%). Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (74.29%), with smaller proportions having high school education (15.71%) or postgraduate degrees (10%). In terms of professional affiliation, 60% of participants worked in the hotel industry, while 40% were employed in travel agencies. Overall, the sample reflects a predominantly male, well-educated workforce concentrated in mid-career stages within hospitality and travel sectors.

Table 2. Participant's profile (N=420)

		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	298	70.95
	Female	122	29.05
Age	18:< 30 years	128	30.48
	30 : 45 years	187	44.52
	>45	105	25
Education	High schools	66	15.71
	Bachelor	312	74.29
	Master/PhD	42	10
Workplace	Hotels	252	60.00
	Travel agencies	168	40
To guarantee the accuracy and appropriateness of the responses, the study restricted participation to individuals who had at least one year of work experience. This requirement is consistent with Morrison's (1993) observation that employees generally become sufficiently acquainted with their organization's culture within their initial six months on the job.			

Non-response and common method biases

To assess the risk of non-response bias, independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare early and late respondents across key study variables. The results revealed no statistically significant differences ($p > 0.05$), suggesting that non-response bias is unlikely to compromise the validity of the findings. Common method variance (CMV) was evaluated using multiple diagnostic techniques. First, Harman's single-factor test was applied through principal component analysis. The results indicated that no single factor accounted for more than 50% of the total variance, implying that CMV is not a major concern. To reinforce this conclusion, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were also examined (see Table 3). All VIF scores were well below the conservative threshold of 3.3, providing further evidence that common method bias is not a significant issue in this study.

Measurement model

Table 3 summarizes the results of model fit and quality assessments based on the evaluation criteria proposed by Kock (2021), all of which meet or exceed the recommended thresholds.

Table 3: Model fit and quality indices

	Assessment	Criterion	Decision
Average path coefficient (APC)	0.235, P=0.001	P<0.05	Supported
Average R-squared (ARS)	0.172, P=0.011	P<0.05	Supported
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)	0.159, P=0.016	P<0.05	Supported
Average block VIF (AVIF)	1.630	acceptable if ≤ 5, ideally ≤ 3.3	Supported
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	1.534	acceptable if ≤ 5, ideally ≤ 3.3	Supported
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	0.333	small ≥ 0.1, medium ≥ 0.25, large ≥ 0.36	Supported
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.7, ideally = 1	Supported
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.9, ideally = 1	Supported
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	1.000	acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Supported
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	0.875	acceptable if ≥ 0.7	Supported

Table 4 summarizes the psychometric properties of the study constructs, including indicator loadings, composite reliability (CR), Cronbach's alpha (CA), average variance extracted (AVE), and variance inflation factors (VIF). All constructs show strong internal consistency and validity. For presenteeism (PR), item loadings range from 0.731 to 0.852, with a CR of 0.910, CA of 0.881, and AVE of 0.628—all indicating good reliability and convergent validity. The VIF value of 1.411 suggests no multicollinearity concerns.

Psychological withdrawal (PW) exhibits high loadings between 0.795 and 0.888, with excellent reliability metrics (CR = 0.951, CA = 0.941) and an AVE of 0.709. Its VIF (1.728) also falls within acceptable limits. Emotional exhaustion (EE) shows slightly lower item loadings, ranging from 0.647 to 0.803. However, its CR (0.882), CA (0.848), and AVE (0.507) are all within acceptable thresholds, indicating adequate measurement reliability. Finally, Employees' psychological resilience (EPR) displays loadings from 0.678 to 0.735, with a CR of 0.819, CA of 0.734, and AVE of 0.506, again supporting the construct's reliability. The VIF values across all constructs remain below the threshold of 3.3, confirming that multicollinearity is not an issue. Overall, the psychometric results validate the reliability and construct validity of the measurement model.

Table 4. Results of psychometric properties

Construct	Indicators	Loading	CR	CA	AVE	VIF
Presenteeism (PR)	PR.1	0.810	0.910	0.881	0.628	1.411
	PR.2	0.742				
	PR.3	0.821				
	PR.4	0.731				
	PR.5	0.792				
	PR.6	0.852				
Psychological withdrawal (PW)	PW.1	0.844	0.951	0.941	0.709	1.728
	PW.2	0.830				
	PW.3	0.835				
	PW.4	0.846				
	PW.5	0.888				
	PW.6	0.879				
	PW.7	0.817				
	PW.8	0.795				
Emotional exhaustion (EE)	EE.1	0.647	0.882	0.848	0.507	1.259
	EE.2	0.654				
	EE.3	0.682				
	EE.4	0.799				
	EE.5	0.803				
	EE.6	0.684				
	EE.7	0.787				
	EE.8	0.667				
	EE.9	0.666				
Employees' psychological resilience (EPR)	EPR.1	0.735	0.819	0.734	0.506	1.898
	EPR.2	0.684				
	EPR.3	0.678				
	EPR.4	0.716				
	EPR.5	0.727				
	EPR.6	0.725				

Table 5 presents the intercorrelations among the latent constructs, with the square roots of the AVE values reported along the diagonal. The square roots of the AVEs for all constructs—presenteeism (0.793), psychological withdrawal (0.842), emotional exhaustion (0.712), and employees' psychological resilience (0.711)—exceed their corresponding inter-construct correlations. This satisfies the Fornell-Larcker criterion, indicating that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model. These results confirm that discriminant validity is adequately established, supporting the distinctiveness of the constructs and the overall validity of the measurement model.

Table 5. Correlations among latent variables with the square root of AVEs

Construct	PR	PW	EE	EPR
Presenteeism (PR)	0.793			
Psychological withdrawal (PW)	0.262	0.842		
Emotional exhaustion (EE)	0.175	0.301	0.712	
Employees' psychological resilience (EPR)	0.244	0.640	0.428	0.711

Table 6 presents the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratios used to assess discriminant validity among the study's key constructs. The HTMT values between presenteeism, psychological withdrawal, emotional exhaustion, and employees' psychological resilience all fall well below the commonly accepted threshold of 0.85, indicating that each construct is distinct from the others. These findings confirm that the constructs in the model are empirically separate and appropriately measured.

Table 6. Discriminant validity (HTMT)

Construct	PR	PW	EE	EPR
Presenteeism (PR)				
Psychological withdrawal (PW)	0.291			
Emotional exhaustion (EE)	0.280	0.343		
Employees' psychological resilience (EPR)	0.317	0.754	0.599	

Multi-group analysis

Table 7 displays the results of the multigroup analysis comparing path coefficients between employees working in five-star hotels and those in travel agencies. The analysis examined four key relationships, including the effects of PR on PW, PR on EE, EE on PW, and the moderating role of EPR on the relationship between PR and EE. While some differences in path coefficients were observed—for example, the effect of

PR on PW was stronger in five-star hotels (0.378) than in travel agencies (0.173)—none of these differences reached statistical significance, as all p-values exceeded the conventional threshold ($p>0.05$). Consequently, no significant effects were supported across the two groups, indicating that the relationships among the variables are consistent regardless of workplace setting.

Table 7: Multigroup analysis results

Relationship	Path coeff. (Five-Star Hotel)	Path coef. (Travel Agency)	Absolute path coeff. Diff.	p-value (one-tailed)	Decision
RP →PW	0.378	0.173	0.205	0.099	Not Supported
PR →EE	0.316	0.288	0.028	0.446	Not Supported
EE →PW	0.187	0.212	0.025	0.438	Not Supported
PR*EPR → EE	-0.158	-0.210	0.052	0.375	Not Supported

Structural model and hypotheses testing

Table 8 presents the findings of the structural model, highlighting both direct and moderating effects among the variables. The direct relationships tested in hypotheses H1 through H3 are all supported, with path coefficients indicating moderate effects: presenteeism (PR) positively influences psychological withdrawal (PW) ($\beta=0.28$, $p<0.01$), presenteeism (PR) positively affects emotional exhaustion (EE) ($\beta=0.29$, $p<0.01$), and emotional exhaustion in turn positively impacts psychological withdrawal ($\beta=0.21$, $p<0.01$). Additionally, hypothesis H5, which tested the moderating effect of employees' psychological resilience (EPR) on the relationship between presenteeism and emotional exhaustion, was supported, showing a negative moderation effect ($\beta=-0.16$, $p=0.03$). The reported effect sizes (f^2) suggest small to moderate impacts according to Cohen (1988) criteria, and the model explains 18% of the variance in emotional exhaustion and 17% in psychological withdrawal, indicating a reasonable level of explanatory power.

Table 8: Direct and moderation effects

H	Structural Paths	Path Coefficient (β)	P-values	Effect Size (f2)	Result
Direct Effect					
H1	PR →PW	0.28	<0.01	0.098	Supported
H2	PR →EE	0.29	<0.01	0.117	Supported
H3	EE →PW	0.21	<0.01	0.069	Supported
Moderating Effect					
H5	PR*EPR → EE	-0.16	=0.03	0.059	Supported
EE R2: = 0.18, PW R2: = 0.17					

Table 9 summarizes the mediation analysis, using bootstrapping method suggested by Preacher & Hayes (2008), examining whether emotional exhaustion (EE) mediates the relationship between presenteeism (PR) and psychological withdrawal (PW). The indirect effect of PR on PW through EE was found to be statistically significant, with an indirect path coefficient of 0.061 (standard error=0.030) and a t-value of 2.03. The bootstrapped 95% confidence interval ranged from 0.002 to 0.120, excluding zero, which confirms the presence of a significant partial mediation effect. This finding supports hypothesis H4, indicating that emotional exhaustion partially explains the impact of presenteeism on psychological withdrawal.

Table 9. Mediation analysis' Bootstrapped confidence interval

Hypo.		Path a	Path b	Indirect Effect	SE	t-value	Bootstrapped Confidence Interval		Mediation
							95% LL	95% UL	
H4	PR→EE→PW	0.290	0.210	0.061	0.030	2.030	0.002	0.120	Yes

Discussion and theoretical implications

This study explored the relationships among presenteeism, emotional exhaustion, psychological withdrawal, and psychological resilience among employees working in five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies in Egypt. The research was anchored in the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, both of which offer robust frameworks for understanding how job stressors and personal resources affect employee well-being and behavior. The findings provide strong support for the hypothesized relationships and contribute meaningfully to existing theoretical and empirical discourse. Aligned with the JD-R model, the results confirm that presenteeism acts as a significant job demand that depletes employees' psychological resources. Employees who attend work despite illness or mental strain are more likely to engage in psychological withdrawal, which includes behaviors such as disengagement, reduced effort, and emotional detachment. This finding is consistent with earlier research indicating that presenteeism undermines cognitive and emotional functioning, making it difficult for employees to remain fully engaged (Schill et al., 2023; Zakeri et al., 2024). As Bakker and Demerouti (2017) assert, heightened job demands—such as working while unwell—contribute directly to strain, which manifests in disengaged or withdrawal behavior. The study also demonstrates that presenteeism significantly predicts emotional exhaustion, a central component of burnout. This supports prior findings across various high-demand occupations, such as service industries, where presenteeism accelerates the depletion of both emotional and

physical resources (Zhang et al., 2025; Miraglia & Johns, 2016). COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll et al., 2018) provides a meaningful lens to interpret this finding, emphasizing that persistent resource loss, particularly without adequate recovery, leads to heightened stress and eventual emotional exhaustion. Importantly, emotional exhaustion was found to significantly predict psychological withdrawal, further validating both JD-R and COR frameworks. This relationship confirms that employees experiencing emotional fatigue often disengage from their tasks as a coping mechanism to preserve remaining psychological energy (Yang, 2023; Hernández et al., 2024). The mediating role of emotional exhaustion between presenteeism and withdrawal supports previous empirical studies that have identified burnout symptoms as precursors to disengagement in multiple workplace contexts (Tong et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2025). Within the JD-R model, this pathway represents the progression from job demands to strain and ultimately to negative work behaviors. Similarly, from a COR perspective, this reflects a resource loss spiral where initial depletion (via presenteeism) leads to emotional exhaustion, and in turn, to protective withdrawal behaviors. A significant theoretical contribution of this study is the identification of psychological resilience as a moderating factor in the relationship between presenteeism and emotional exhaustion. Employees with higher levels of resilience were found to be less affected by the emotional strain associated with presenteeism. This aligns with recent extensions to the JD-R model that highlight the buffering role of personal resources—such as resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy—in mitigating the effects of high job demands (Lesener et al., 2020; Mazzetti et al., 2022). Furthermore, the finding resonates with COR theory's concept of resource caravans—clusters of resources that work together to protect individuals from further loss and facilitate recovery and growth (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2022).

Theoretically, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the stress-strain-disengagement mechanism. By showing that emotional exhaustion mediates the link between presenteeism and withdrawal, and that resilience can weaken the effect of presenteeism on emotional exhaustion, the study enhances both the JD-R model's applicability and the explanatory power of COR theory in the hospitality and tourism sectors. Additionally, it supports the evolving perspective that personal resources should be given equal emphasis as job resources in shaping employee outcomes (Bakker et al., 2023). In summary, the findings offer empirical support for the JD-R model's claim that job demands lead to strain and disengagement, and reinforce COR theory's proposition that resource loss can be buffered by individual resilience. These results are particularly relevant to high-pressure service industries, where employee well-being is essential for sustaining organizational effectiveness and service quality. The findings of this study provide actionable insights for managers, HR professionals, and organizational leaders in hospitality and travel, particularly in high-pressure contexts such as five-star hotels and category-A travel agencies. A primary implication is the urgent need to address presenteeism, which significantly contributes to emotional exhaustion and psychological withdrawal. Organizations should revise and clearly communicate sick leave policies to ensure employees do not feel compelled to work while unwell due to fear of penalties. In parallel, supervisors should be trained to recognize signs of presenteeism and encourage recovery without negative consequences. Implementing structured return-to-work practices, such as brief check-ins, can further support employees' readiness and well-being.

The mediating role of emotional exhaustion highlights the importance of proactive burnout prevention. Organizations are encouraged to adopt regular well-being assessments, such as short monthly surveys or confidential check-ins, to monitor stress levels and detect early signs of burnout. Providing access to professional mental health support—through in-house services, external partnerships, or telehealth platforms—is also critical. During peak seasons, optional recovery-oriented initiatives, such as mindfulness sessions or resilience workshops, can help employees cope with heightened demands. Furthermore, the buffering effect of psychological resilience underscores the value of investing in resilience-building initiatives. Training programs focused on stress management, emotional regulation, and adaptive thinking can strengthen employees' coping capacities. Incorporating simple mindfulness practices into daily routines and fostering peer support or mentorship programs can also enhance collective resilience. Finally, a supportive organizational culture is essential to sustain these efforts. Promoting open communication, teamwork, and trust can improve employee well-being. Providing greater flexibility in work schedules and recognizing healthy work behaviors—such as appropriate leave use and peer support—can reinforce a culture that prioritizes care, recovery, and long-term performance.

Limitations and future research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that suggest directions for future research. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality between the variables. Longitudinal or experimental studies are recommended to more definitively establish causal pathways and examine how these relationships evolve over time. Second, the study focused solely on employees in five-star hotels and

category-A travel agencies in Egypt, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other industries, countries, or cultural contexts. Future research should examine whether these results hold in different sectors and diverse geographic settings. Third, while psychological resilience was found to moderate the relationship between presenteeism and emotional exhaustion, other personal and organizational resources—such as social support, self-efficacy, or job control—may also play significant roles and should be explored in future models. Lastly, the measurement relied on self-reported data, which can introduce bias such as social desirability or common method variance. Incorporating objective measures, peer reports, or physiological indicators in future research would strengthen validity.

Funding

This work was supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia [KFU260448].

Acknowledgment

This work was supported by the Deanship of Scientific Research, Vice Presidency for Graduate Studies and Scientific Research, King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia [KFU260448].

References

Alghamdi, A., Baquero, A., Khairy, H. A., & Salama, W. M. E. (2024). Social loafing and job performance in hotels: Does transactional leadership matter? *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 13*(1), 192–197. https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.497

Amissah, E. F., Blankson-Stiles-Ocran, S., & Mensah, I. (2022). Emotional labour, emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction in the hospitality industry. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights, 5*(5), 805–821. https://doi.org/10.1108/JHTI-10-2020-0196

Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2017). Job demands–resources theory: Taking stock and looking forward. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *22*(3), 273–285. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000056

Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Sanz-Vergel, A. I. (2023). Job demands–resources theory: Ten years later. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *10*, 25–52. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-120920-053933

Balaji, B. (2022). Work performance and stress alleviation in hospitality services. *ECS Transactions, 107*(1), 3407. https://doi.org/10.1149/10701.3407ecst

Baquero, A., Khairy, H. A., & Al-Romeedy, B. S. (2025). Workplace stressors and the intention to quit: The role of psychological distress and psychological flexibility among hospitality employees. *Tourism and Hospitality, 6*(2), 72. https://doi.org/10.3390/tourhosp6020072

Bari, M. W., Abrar, M., Shaheen, S., Bashir, M., & Fanchen, M. (2019). Knowledge hiding behaviors and team creativity: The contingent role of perceived mastery motivational climate. *SAGE Open, 9*(3), 2158244019876297. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019876297

Cai, Z., Mao, Y., Gong, T., Xin, Y., & Lou, J. (2023). The effect of servant leadership on work resilience: Evidence from the hospitality industry during the COVID-19 period. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 20*(2), 1322. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph20021322

Chen, S., Wang, Y., & Zhang, X. (2023). Conservation of resources theory and employee well-being: A review and future research agenda. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *44*(2), 234–251. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.2661

Chih-Chieh, C., & Chun-Yi, C. (2024). Hybrid work stressors and psychological withdrawal behavior: A moderated mediation model of emotional exhaustion and proactive personality. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 155*, 104053. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2024.104053

Chin, A. C., Lee, N. G., & Chen, I.-C. (2024). The impact of job insecurity on job burnout among hospitality employees during the COVID-19 pandemic: The moderating role of supervisor and co-worker support. *International Hospitality Review, 38*(1), 160–181. https://doi.org/10.1108/IHR-08-2022-0034

Chiwawa, N., & Wissink, H. (2021). Determinants of employee engagement in the South African hospitality industry during COVID-19 lockdown epoch: Employee perception. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 10*(2), 487–499. https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-113

Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Dalmış, A. B., Büyükatak, E., & Sürücü, L. (2025). Psychological resilience and future anxiety among university students: The mediating role of subjective well-being. *Behavioral Sciences, 15*(3), 244. https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15030244

Dlamini, N. N. N., Garg, A. K., & Muchie, M. (2017). The impact of transformational leadership style on organizational commitment in the hospitality industry. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 6*(3), 1–21.

Dong, X. T., Chung, Y. W., & Yun, J. K. (2023). The mediating effects of anxiety and happiness and the moderating effect of social network services for employee silence and psychological withdrawal behavior. *SAGE Open, 13*(4), 21582440231206969.

Dong, X. T., Chung, Y. W., & Yun, J. K. (2023). The mediating effects of anxiety and happiness and the moderating effect of social network services for employee silence and psychological withdrawal behavior. *SAGE Open, 13*(4), 21582440231206969. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231206969

Fabrizio, C., Picerni, E., Laricchiuta, D., Decandia, D., Piras, F., Termine, A., Spalletta, G., Petrosini, L., & Cutuli, D. (2025). Psychological and neuro-morphological predictors of resilience in healthy adults: The whole is more than the sum of its parts. *Frontiers in Neuroscience, 19*, 1597835. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnins.2025.1597835

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2016). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

Halbesleben, J. R. B., & Wheeler, A. R. (2022). Resource gain spirals: Applying conservation of resources theory to explain trajectories of well-being. *Academy of Management Review*, *47*(3), 421–443. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2019.0155

Halbesleben, J. R. B., Neveu, J.-P., Paustian-Underdahl, S. C., & Westman, M. (2014). Getting to the "COR": Understanding the role of resources in conservation of resources theory. *Journal of Management, 40*(5), 1334–1364. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206314527130

Hassanie, S., Uludag, O., Trivedi, D., BouKarroum, S., & Saidy, J. (2025). Who cares for the healthcare workers? The impact of workplace incivility on healthcare workers' traumatic stress and mental health mediated by psychological resilience. *Human Factors in Healthcare, 7*, 100105. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hfh.2025.100105

Hernández, E., Sánchez, P., & García, L. (2024). The impact of emotional exhaustion on the performance of SMEs. *Journal of Innovation & Knowledge*.
(Note: This reference is incomplete and requires volume, issue, page numbers/article number, and DOI if available.)

Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist, 44*(3), 513–524. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513

Hobfoll, S. E., Halbesleben, J., Neveu, J.-P., & Westman, M. (2018). Conservation of resources in the organizational context: The reality of resources and their consequences. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 5*, 103–128. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-032117-104640

Karatepe, O. M., Okumus, F., & Saydam, M. B. (2024). Outcomes of job insecurity among hotel employees during COVID-19. *International Hospitality Review, 38*(1), 101–118. https://doi.org/10.1108/IHR-11-2021-0070

Khairy, H. A. (2020). Presenteeism of hotel employees: Interaction effects of job stress and emotional labor. *Journal of the Faculty of Tourism and Hotels, University of Sadat City, 4*(1/2), 15–36.

Khairy, H. A., & Mahmoud, R. H. (2022). Damping the relationship between work pressure and presenteeism through servant leadership in hotels. *Journal of Tourism, Hotels and Heritage, 5*(2), 15–31.

Khairy, H. A., Baquero, A., Al-Abyadh, M. H., & Alsetoohy, O. (2023). How is work disengagement affected by workplace bullying in the hotel industry? The role of authentic leadership. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 12*(4), 1437–1452. https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720.441

Kim, Y.-S., Shin, D.-J., & Kim, B.-K. (2023). Effect of COVID-19-induced changes on job insecurity, presenteeism, and turnover intention in the workplace—An investigation of generalized anxiety disorder among hotel employees using the GAD-7 scale. *Sustainability, 15*(6), 5377. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15065377

Knani, M. (2022). What motivates tourism and hospitality employees to practice presenteeism? *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management, 52*, 198–207. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhtm.2022.06.017

Kock, N. (2021). *WarpPLS user manual: Version 7.0*. ScriptWarp Systems.

Koopman, C., Pelletier, K. R., Murray, J. F., Sharda, C. E., Berger, M. L., Turpin, R. S., Hackelman, P., Gibson, P., Holmes, D. M., & Bendel, T. (2002). Stanford presenteeism scale: Health status and employee productivity. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, 44*(1), 14–20.

Lehman, W. E., & Simpson, D. D. (1992). Employee substance use and on-the-job behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 77*(3), 309–321.

Lesener, T., Gusy, B., Jochmann, A., & Wolter, C. (2020). The job demands–resources model: A meta-analytic review of longitudinal studies. *Work & Stress, 34*(1), 57–79. https://doi.org/10.1080/02678373.2019.1686440

Maslach, C., Jackson, S. E., Leiter, M. P., Schaufeli, W. B., & Schwab, R. L. (1986). *Maslach burnout inventory* (Vol. 21). Consulting Psychologists Press.

Mazzetti, G., Robledo, E., Vignoli, M., Topa, G., & Guglielmi, D. (2022). Work engagement: A meta-analysis using the job demands–resources model. *Psychology of Well-Being, 12*(1), 1–30. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13612-022-00109-5

Miraglia, M., & Johns, G. (2016). Going to work ill: A meta-analysis of the correlates of presenteeism and a dual-path model. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 21*(3), 261–283. https://doi.org/10.1037/ocp0000015

Morrison, E. W. (1993). Newcomer information seeking: Exploring types, modes, sources, and outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal, 36*(3), 557–589.

Mukwevho, H., Nesamvuni, A. E., & Roberson, J. R. (2020). Factors impacting employee absenteeism and the managers' perception of its causes in the hotel industry. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure, 9*(5), 1161–1177. https://doi.org/10.46222/ajhtl.19770720-75

Olasupo, M. O. (2023). Moderated mediation analysis of presenteeism and workplace health promotion program between emotional exhaustion and turnover intention among nurses. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health, 1*, 100006. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.glmedi.2023.100006

Pasha, A., Inusah, A. H. S., Nayem, J., Li, X., & Qiao, S. (2025). A systematic review of psychological resilience in the COVID-19 responses: Current research and future directions. *medRxiv*. https://doi.org/10.1101/2025.02.15.25322337

Peng, P., & Li, X. (2023). The hidden costs of emotional labor on withdrawal behavior: The mediating role of emotional exhaustion and the moderating effect of mindfulness. *BMC Psychology, 11*(1), 342. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01392-z

Preacher, K. J., & Hayes, A. F. (2008). Asymptotic and resampling strategies for assessing and comparing indirect effects in multiple mediator models. *Behavior Research Methods, 40*(3), 879–891.

Schill, A. L., Radwan, A., Monaghan, P. F., & Strong, L. L. (2023). Presenteeism among hired farmworkers in the United States: A scoping review. *Journal of Agromedicine, 28*(2), 163–174. https://doi.org/10.1177/21650799231154281

Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The brief resilience scale: Assessing the ability to bounce back. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 15*(3), 194–200.

Stensvehagen, M. T., Bronken, A., Lien, L., & Larsson, G. (2022). Is emotional exhaustion only the result of work experiences? A diary study on daily hassles and uplifts in different life domains. *Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences*.

The Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. (2022). *Hotel and tourism companies and establishments: Directory of hotel establishments and tourism companies*. https://mota.gov.eg/ar/

Wut, T.-M., Lee, S.-W., & Xu, J. (2022). Role of organizational resilience and psychological resilience in the workplace—Internal stakeholder perspective. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19*(18), 11799. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191811799

Xu, C., Shaheen, S., & Bari, M. W. (2025). Organizational cronyism and employee psychological withdrawal behavior: The mediating role of disidentification and moderating effect of employability. *BMC Psychology, 13*(1), 944. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-025-03279-7

Xu, Y., Ni, Y., Yang, J., Wu, J., Lin, Y., Li, J., ... Zhu, Z. (2024). The relationship between psychological resilience and post-traumatic growth of college students during the COVID-19 pandemic: A model of conditioned processes mediated by negative emotions and moderated by deliberate rumination. *BMC Psychology, 12*(1), 357. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-024-01853-z

Yang, N. (2023). The causes, effects, and interventions of workplace emotional exhaustion. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media, 6*, 516–520. https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/6/20231600

Zakeri, M. A., Rahmani, F., Ahmadi, F., & Dehghan, M. (2024). An integrative review on presenteeism among nurses: Antecedents, consequences, and future directions. *Health Science Reports, 7*(6), e2002.

Zhang, Y., Li, J., & Wang, H. (2025). Team presenteeism climate and its impact on ICU nurses' work stress: The moderating role of mindfulness. *BMC Nursing, 24*(1), 87. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-025-03377-