

Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies 340

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# Advances in Tourism, Technology and Systems

Selected Papers from ICOTTS 2022,  
Volume 2

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# **Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies**

Volume 340

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António Abreu · João Vidal Carvalho ·  
Dália Liberato · Iván Suazo Galdames  
Editors

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 Springer

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## Editorial

This book—Advances in Tourism, Technology and Systems volume 2—from the SIST Series is composed of the best-selected papers accepted for presentation and discussion at the 2022 International Conference on Tourism, Technology and Systems (ICOTTS'22). The ICOTTS is a multidisciplinary conference with a special focus on new technologies and systems in the tourism sector and was held between 03 and 05 November 2022. The ICOTTS'22 was supported by the Autonomous University of Chile, Santiago, Chile and by IADITI (International Association for Digital Transformation and Technological Innovation).

The International Conference on Tourism, Technologies and Systems is an international forum for researchers and professionals in the tourism sector, which enables the discussion of the latest innovations, trends and concerns in several areas, in the Tourism sector, associated with Information Technologies and Systems. It is an event for professionals in the sector, in search of technology solutions, where academics, IT experts and business managers meet to discuss new ideas that help them maximize the potential of tourism business through technology.

The ICOTTS'22 Scientific Committee is composed of a multidisciplinary group of 137 experts who assessed some 296 papers from 22 countries, received for each of the main topics proposed for the conference: (a) Tourism research in providing innovative solutions to social problems; (b) Information and communication technologies in hospitality and tourism industry; (c) Sustainable Tourism; (d) Tourism Trends; (e) Health and wellness Tourism; (f) Tourism Management; (g) Marketing strategies in hospitality and tourism industry; (h) Hospitality, tourism and foodservice environment; (i) Tourism in the different scientific areas; and (j) eTourism and Tourism 2.0.

The papers accepted for presentation and discussion at the Conference are published by Springer and will be submitted for indexing by ISI, SCOPUS, EI-Compendex, Google Scholar and Springerlink.

We thank all those who contributed to the ICOTTS'22 conference (authors, committees, workshop organizers and sponsors). We deeply appreciate your involvement and support, which were crucial to the success of the conference.

Porto, Portugal  
November 2022

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# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Professional Skills Developed in a E@D Practicum</b> .....	<b>1</b>
	Rosa Martins, Estrela Paulo, Dulce Noronha-Sousa, Eusébio Costa, and João Pascoinho	
<b>2</b>	<b>ICT and the Role of Educators in the Inclusion of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)</b> .....	<b>11</b>
	Tânia Silva, Sónia Leite, Rosa Martins, Eusébio Costa, Estrela Paulo, and João Pascoinho	
<b>3</b>	<b>The Importance of the Family in Early Intervention Practices Using ICT</b> .....	<b>23</b>
	Mário Faria, Sónia Leite, Rosa Martins, Eusébio Costa, Estrela Paulo, and João Pascoinho	
<b>4</b>	<b>Higher Education Dropout in COVID-19 Pandemic Times: Validation of a Student Survey (PSS)</b> .....	<b>33</b>
	Susana Sá, Cândido Gomes, Carlos Ângelo Meneses Sousa, Dulce Noronha-Sousa, João Pascoinho, Agostinho Sousa Pinto, and Eusébio Costa	
<b>5</b>	<b>Interdisciplinarity in University Education: Application to Research</b> .....	<b>43</b>
	Joana Costa, Dimas Pinto, Inês Oliveira Gonçalves, Joana Rodrigues-Carvalho, and Aldina Sofia Silva	
<b>6</b>	<b>The Importance of Motivating Students with Special Needs Attending Higher Education in the Face of Distance Education</b> ....	<b>55</b>
	Sónia Leite, Rosa Martins, Eusébio Costa, and Dulce Noronha-Sousa	
<b>7</b>	<b>Challenges of Initial Training in Times of Pandemic: Social Education Internship Experience</b> .....	<b>63</b>
	Ana Camões and Isabel Baptista	

<b>8</b>	<b>The Impact of Reading Habits on School Success: Perspectives of Student and Teacher Librarians</b> .....	71
	Pedro Lopes, César Freitas, João Pascoinho, Estrela Paulo, Rosa Martins, Sofia Gonçalves, Joana Cavalcanti, and Teresa Macedo	
<b>9</b>	<b>The Promotion of Playful Reading—Evaluation by the Participants of the “10 Minutes Reading” Project</b> .....	81
	Cristina Ribeiro, César Freitas, João Pascoinho, Estrela Paulo, Rosa Martins, Sofia Gonçalves, Joana Cavalcanti, and Teresa Macedo	
<b>10</b>	<b>DPO Framework for Canvas GDPR Model</b> .....	93
	Miguel Magalhães, Tiago C. Pereira, Eusébio Costa, Agostinho Sousa Pinto, José Luís Braga, and Isabel Borges	
<b>11</b>	<b>The Impact of Remote Teaching in Teachers’ Motivation: In Time Pandemic COVID-19</b> .....	111
	Joaquim Paulo Lima, Susana Sá, João Pascoinho, Eusébio Costa, Joana Torres, and Manuel Trigueiro da Rocha	
<b>12</b>	<b>Digital Training and Satisfaction in Hotel Business in Portugal: The Case of a Hotel in the District of Braga</b> .....	123
	Paulo Cunha, Laurentino Guimarães, Susana Sá, Isabel Borges, and Eusébio Costa	
<b>13</b>	<b>Eco-Schools in Higher Education Institutions: Analysing Portuguese Students’ Practices and Perspectives</b> .....	133
	Joana Torres, Rosa Martins, César de Freitas, Ana Camões, and Isilda Rodrigues	
<b>14</b>	<b>The Technological Impact on Local Tourism: The Case of Fafe</b> ....	145
	Catarina Freitas Da Mota, Isabel Borges, José Luís Braga, Sandra Brás, Américo Silva, and Sónia Leite	
<b>15</b>	<b>Understanding the Adoption of Certified Electronic Signature in Portugal</b> .....	157
	Agostinho Sousa Pinto, António Abreu, Eusébio Costa, and Jerónimo Paiva	
<b>16</b>	<b>Intervision of School Practice in Educational Context: Validation of a Focused Observation Grid</b> .....	169
	Ana Cabral, Antónia Freitas, Paula Freire, Fernanda Macedo, Susana Sá, João Pascoinho, and Dulce Noronha-Sousa	

<b>17 A Neural Model with a Deep Learning Structure for Characterizing Relaxation Levels Through Olfactory Stimuli to Enhance the Guest Experience in Hotels</b> .....	179
Valentina Pérez, Isabel González, Alejandro Peña, Lina María Sepúlveda-Cano, Jorge Guerrero, and Joao Vidal de Carvalho	
<b>18 Senior Entrepreneurship, Sustainable Tourism, and Preservation of Collective Memory</b> .....	193
Teresa Medeiros, Susana Goulart Costa, José Mendes, Licínio Tomás, and Joaquim Armando Ferreira	
<b>19 Inclusive Cultural Heritage Tourism</b> .....	207
Nuno Escudeiro, Paula Escudeiro, Bruno Cunha, and Márcia Campos Gouveia	
<b>20 Aqua Spa, a New Business Model</b> .....	219
Clara Teixeira, Maria José Ferreira, Norberto Fernandes, Pedro Barroso, and Teresa Dieguez	
<b>21 Communication Skills in Higher Education Versus the Labor Market: Different Perceptions and Valuations</b> .....	229
Inês Braga and António Abreu	
<b>22 Meeting the Rural Tourists' Expectations in the Azores Destination: A Preliminary Study-Based on the Perceptions of the Entrepreneurs</b> .....	247
Rui Alexandre Castanho, Gualter Couto, Pedro Pimentel, Àurea Sousa, Maria da Graça Batista, and Mara Franco	
<b>23 Digital Transformation in Companies: A Literature Bibliometric Analysis</b> .....	257
Albertina Monteiro, Catarina Cepêda, and Amélia Silva	
<b>24 Smart Destinations and Consumer Journey</b> .....	269
Fernando Nahat Jardim, Cristina Helena Pinto de Mello, and Suzane Strehlau	
<b>25 Impacts of Events' Tourism in Local Development: The Case of Águeda, Portugal</b> .....	291
Filipa Almeida, Rui Augusto da Costa, Filipa Brandão, and Márcio Ribeiro Martins	
<b>26 The Challenge of Applying Ancient Board Games to Teach Accounting in Higher Education: A Case Study</b> .....	303
Paulo Morais and Amélia Silva	

<b>27 Using Machine Learning to Predict Business Failure in Iberian Hospitality Sector</b> .....	313
Amélia Ferreira da Silva, José Henrique Brito, and José Manuel Pereira	
<b>28 Determinants of Green Consumer Behavior in Tourism and Hotel Management Contexts: A Study Applied to the Côa Region</b> .....	323
Aquiles Fortes, Aida Carvalho, and Bruno Sousa	
<b>29 Management Control Practices in Tourism Agencies—Information Systems Category</b> .....	333
Helena Costa Oliveira, Susana Bastos, and Wendy Carraro	
<b>30 Promoting Favela Storytelling in the Tourist Visitation: An Exploratory Study</b> .....	343
Bruno Sousa, Annaelise Machado, Frederico Ferreira de Oliveira, Alexandra Maria de Abreu Rocha, and Miguel Ribeiro	
<b>31 Studying Global Warming from a Correspondence and Covariation Perspective</b> .....	353
Darío A. González	
<b>32 How the 5G Network Will Boost the Concept of Smart Tourism in Portugal: A Literature Review</b> .....	365
Isabel M. Lopes, Teresa Guarda, António J. G. Fernandes, and Maria I. B. Ribeiro	
<b>33 Online Impulse Buying Tendency—Impact of Psychological, Social, and Technological Factors</b> .....	375
Daniel Costa Pacheco, Ana Isabel Damião de Serpa Arruda Moniz, Suzana Nunes Caldeira, and Osvaldo Dias Lopes da Silva	
<b>34 Vital Signs Monitoring Platform to Promote Sports and Wellness Tourism</b> .....	389
Sandro Carvalho, Dinis Pereira, Joana Santos, and João Vidal Carvalho	
<b>35 Market Segmentation and Relationship Management of Fashion Tourism: An Exploratory Perspective</b> .....	399
Bruno Sousa, Annaelise Machado, Márcia Gonçalves, Lara Santos, and André Catarino	
<b>36 Promotion of Tourism Through the Digital Dissemination of Innovation Research</b> .....	409
João Almeida, Maria José Angélico Gonçalves, and Ana Paula Camarinha	

<b>37</b>	<b>The Evolution of Thermalism in Portugal—The Current State of Health and Wellness Tourism</b> .....	423
	Maria Carlos Lopes, Dália Liberato, and Elisa Alén	
<b>38</b>	<b>The Role of Football Clubs as a Driver of Tourism Marketing Management and Local Development: A Preliminary Study in Minho (Portugal)</b> .....	439
	Cláudia Rodrigues, Bruno Sousa, Laurentina Vareiro, and Victor Figueira	
<b>39</b>	<b>Tourism as an Indicator of Integration with the World Economy: The Case of the World’s 93 Smallest Economies Generating 1% of Global GDP</b> .....	449
	Aneta Teperek and Luís Lima Santos	
<b>40</b>	<b>Residents’ Attitudes and Visitors’ Motivations for War-Related Tourism: An Exploratory Perspective</b> .....	465
	Bruno Sousa, Mary Sánchez, Francisco Gonçalves, Luzia Amorim, and Vítor Silva	
<b>41</b>	<b>A Preliminary Study on Internet of Things (IoT) in Collaborative Tourism Consumption</b> .....	475
	Vasco Ribeiro Santos, Rui Carvalho, Rita Peres, and Bruno Barbosa Sousa	
<b>42</b>	<b>Paradoxes in Tourism and Hospitality Sectors: From Work-Life Balance to Work-Life Conflict in Shift Work</b> .....	483
	Dora Martins and Susana Silva	
<b>43</b>	<b>The Intangibility and Tangibility in Hospitality Management: The Customer Perspective</b> .....	497
	Mónica Oliveira and Filipa Brandão	
<b>44</b>	<b>Impacts of City Brand Personality (CBP) and City Image on City-Related Media Engagement and Resident Satisfaction</b> .....	509
	Ana Isabel Moniz, Osvaldo Silva, and Tânia Rego	
<b>45</b>	<b>Evoli System in Portugal: Experience Reports</b> .....	521
	Adriana Oliveira, Paulino Silva, and Anabela Mesquita	
<b>46</b>	<b>Multiplicative Networks and Slates: Mathematical Learning with Meaning</b> .....	531
	Dárida Fernandes, Maria Inês Pinho, and Luísa Alves	
<b>47</b>	<b>Communication as a Means of Boosting Tourism: Case Study Santa Maria Da Feira</b> .....	545
	Ana Paula Camarinha, António Abreu, Adriana Sousa, Ivone Cardoso, and António Vieira de Castro	

<b>48</b>	<b>The Binary System of Higher Education—The Case of Portugal in the Light of the Current Reality</b> .....	<b>555</b>
	Olímpio Castilho and Maria de Lourdes Machado-Taylor	
<b>49</b>	<b>Place Marketing and Destination Management: A Study in the “Quadrilátero do Minho”</b> .....	<b>567</b>
	Júlio Silva, Bruno Sousa, and João Abreu	
<b>50</b>	<b>Event Planning as a Sustainable Development Strategy for Tourism Destinations</b> .....	<b>579</b>
	Dália Liberato, Teresa Dieguez, Leonor Jesus, Pedro Liberato, and Teresa Mendes	
<b>51</b>	<b>The Potential of Responsible Nature Tourism as a Driver of Sustainable Development in Northern Portugal</b> .....	<b>597</b>
	A. I. Correia and I. Sousa	
<b>52</b>	<b>The Role of Social Media in the Regrowth of Formula 1 in Portugal</b> .....	<b>609</b>
	Ana Paula Camarinha, António Abreu, Luís Miguel Martins, Ivone Cardoso, and António Vieira de Castro	
<b>53</b>	<b>The Role of “Age of Society” Games in Cultural Heritage Learning</b> .....	<b>627</b>
	Paula Maria Flores, Maria Inês Pinho, Dárida Maria Fernandes, Bruno Gavaia, and Catarina Ribeiro	
<b>54</b>	<b>An Approach to Revenue Management Strategies in the Hospitality Industry</b> .....	<b>639</b>
	Dália Liberato, Mónica Oliveira, Rui Cardoso, and Pedro Liberato	
<b>55</b>	<b>Tourism Safety and Security with a Sustainability Vision, Ciudad Juarez (Mexico)</b> .....	<b>651</b>
	Manuel Ramón González Herrera	
<b>56</b>	<b>The Economic Impacts of the Tourism Sector Within the Residents’ Valuation Perspective</b> .....	<b>663</b>
	Pedro Liberato, Dália Liberato, and Ricardo Cerqueira	
<b>57</b>	<b>Sustainable Destination Development Based on Gamification and Storytelling: Empowering the Douro Region Through Wine and Gastronomy</b> .....	<b>683</b>
	Dália Liberato, Pedro Liberato, Marta Nunes, and Ana Ferreira	
<b>58</b>	<b>Telework as a Management Tool in Public Administration: Advantages and Disadvantages of Its Application</b> .....	<b>707</b>
	Adalmiro Pereira, Hugo Castro Mendonça, Mário Queirós, and Barbara Soares de Moura	

<b>59</b>	<b>Accessible Tourism and Digitalization: Stakeholders Perspective in the City of Barcelos</b> .....	721
	Bruno Sousa, Francisco Gonçalves, António Abreu, Victor Figueira, João Rolha, Ana Paula Camarinha, and Ivone Cardoso	
<b>60</b>	<b>Is There an Economic Bias in Academic Success?</b> .....	731
	Eleonora Santos, Milena Carvalho, and Susana Martins	
<b>61</b>	<b>The Role of the Balanced Scorecard as a Differentiating Factor for Education Marketing</b> .....	745
	Ana Catarina Azevedo, Patrícia Quesado, Bruno Sousa, and Alexandrino Ribeiro	
<b>62</b>	<b>Education Crisis—Digital Solutions After Covid-19</b> .....	755
	Ana Branca da Silva Soeiro de Carvalho, Nídia Menezes, Susana Fonseca, and Miguel Mota	
<b>63</b>	<b>The Commoditisation of Literature Analysed in the Classroom. The Case of Porto’s Literary Hotels</b> .....	763
	Sara Pascoal, Laura Tallone, and Marco Furtado	
<b>64</b>	<b>Blockchain and Digital Signature Supporting Remote Assessment Systems: A Solution Approach Applied to Higher Education Institutions Scope</b> .....	775
	Paulo Victor Dias and Firmino Silva	
<b>65</b>	<b>Personal Report of Communication Apprehension—Adaptation, Application and Validation on Portuguese Accounting Students</b> .....	785
	Rui Silva, Francisco Carreira, Amélia Ferreira da Silva, and António Abreu	
	<b>Author Index</b> .....	797

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## Chapter 42

# Paradoxes in Tourism and Hospitality Sectors: From Work-Life Balance to Work-Life Conflict in Shift Work



Dora Martins and Susana Silva

**Abstract** In the present research, we examine the relationship between shift work and work-to-family balance in the tourism and hospitality sectors. To answer this, the main research objective is to understand the implications of shift work on the work-to-family balance, specifically (1) to explore how the work and family life of shift workers are reconciled between both, (2) to know the shift workers perception about work-to-family balance, and (3) to identify work-to-family balance practices which are promoted by tourism and hospitality organizations. We use a mixed methodology approach through a quantitative approach and a semi-structured interview for the qualitative approach. It applied a questionnaire for 100 human resources professionals from hotels in the north of Portugal and made 20 semi-structured interviews with employees, who are working in tourism and hospitality organizations. The results reveal a certain association between shift work and work-to-family balance, with different results for parents or no parents, as well as results indicate that there is a relative concern of organizations on promoting work-to-family balance practices. From the results obtained, we will contribute to the literature on shift work by showing that conciliation practices help mitigate this work-to-family conflict, especially in the tourism and hospitality sectors.

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483

## 42.1 Introduction

Shift work is a continuous work modality capable of responding to the business needs for the total period of the day and may include weekends and holidays [1, 2]. More and more professions are covered by this work mode, especially those that provide customer services 24 h a day [3–6].

The literature is consensual in suggesting that shift workers have the greatest difficulties in work-to-family reconciliation [3, 7, 8]. Previous studies tend to underline that these shift workers are more permeable to social isolation [2, 7, 8] and problems in reconciling work-life roles, considering the increasing changes in jobs, the growth of flexibility in workplaces, and job insecurity in some industries [9].

Previous studies tend to underline that the difficulty of work-to-family reconciliation among shift workers impacts well-being [6, 10, 11], absenteeism, job satisfaction, and turnover [12–14]. This difficulty in reconciling tends to be particularly high among shift workers in the tourism and hospitality sectors considering the need for increased labor flexibility and cost reduction in the sector [15, 16].

This research has as its main objective to examine the relationship between shift work and work-to-family reconciliation in the tourism and hospitality sectors, and more specifically to know the work-life balance practices implemented by tourism and hospitality organizations as well as to characterize the employees' perception of their work-life balance.

To answer these objectives, two complementary empirical studies were conducted, involving the collection of data from employees and human resource managers of organizations linked to the tourism and hospitality sectors.

This research contributes to the literature review, considering the empirical reality of the Portuguese context, especially by helping to rethink the need to implement work-to-family reconciliation practices as well as to expand the work-to-family practices known in the literature, specifically in periods of greater organizational vulnerability. Another major theoretical contribution is to discuss how work-to-family practices implementation could be reinforcing the attraction to work in shift work modality during crisis periods. This research also shows some practical implications, such as the need to make changes in the management of shift workers, promoting greater engagement of these employees [17–19], and ensuring that shift workers achieve greater work-life reconciliation [20–23]. In addition, this work helps to understand how Human Resources Management (HRM) practices can reduce work-family conflict while providing clues on how organizations can make shift work an equally or more effective work organization modality in work-life reconciliation and employee well-being.

The following section presents the existing literature on shift work, followed by a description of work-to-family reconciliation practices. Section three outlines the methodological approach and section four presents the main findings of the study. Finally, we present the discussion and conclusion sections and underline some suggestions for future research in this field.

## 42.2 Literature Review

### 42.2.1 *Conflict of Work and Family Roles*

Work-family conflict theory goes back to the study conducted by Kahn and colleagues [24]. According to these authors [24], role conflict is the stress resulting from the difficulty experienced by a person to adapt to another role following adaptation to a role or in other words, from the pressure of assuming two or more roles at the same time [9, 25]. Work-to-family conflict (WFC) is defined as the incompatibility between the demands of professional and family roles [26]. Thus, work-family conflict can be bidirectional [23, 26, 27]. On the one hand, WFC arises when demands at work have a negative effect on family life, that is, the interference of work in family life arises when work activities prevent the performance of family responsibilities. On the other hand, family-to-work conflict (FWC) arises when demands at the family level conflict with professional life, that is, the interference of family life at work occurs when family responsibilities hinder work performance. In this sense, the conflict between both spheres of an employee's life can originate either in the professional or family sphere [27], creating problems for individuals as a direct result of incompatible pressures between the two roles [23]. On the contrary, when this conflict does not exist, we can talk about reconciling professional and family roles [9].

Several personal and professional factors act as antecedents to the existence of the aforementioned WFC/FWC, such as long working hours, professional demands, family expectations, number of children, or marital status [9, 23]. Greenhaus and Beutell [26] suggest that individuals with more active roles in both spheres of their lives are more susceptible to WFC, as they are more sensitive to the pressures produced by one sphere on the other, i.e., "for these employees, role responsibilities are obligatory activities or chores since the roles are not highly valued. Since neither domain is more appealing, employees would be less decisive when they face competing demands from work and family roles, resulting in experiences of work-family conflict" [27].

The empirical studies that have investigated the associations between sociodemographic characteristics and WFC/FWC [28–31] show that men tend to be more committed to work and more tolerant of work encroaching on family while women tend to put more concern and commitment to family obligations, trying to avoid work interfering with their family life. In line with this evidence, recent research on the relationship between fatherhood and WFC/FWC [27, 32] shows that men when more involved in family responsibilities experience less work-family conflict. In turn, there is a positive relationship between having a wife and children and a decrease in WFC, while women who are more professionally fulfilled are those who experience less WFC even though they must take care of children. When the analysis focuses on gender [33], it is women who experience more family responsibilities compared to men while men experience more work pressure. This situation tends to fade as children grow older and become more independent from maternal supervision [34]. Wöhrmann and colleagues [35] explored the WFC/FWC and conclude that

both dimensions influence each other by finding that family obligations negatively impact work responsibilities just as these negatively influence family obligations. It is especially women with children who tend to be less satisfied with reconciling both spheres of life, the greatest difficulty being when they are single mothers or without help from their spouses in supporting family life, with women assuming full responsibility for family care and administration [6, 25].

When extrapolating these results to shift workers, we find that the type of shift (fixed or rotating) or the shift schedule does not seem to influence WFC as much as gender issues, which can be explained by the more active role that women still assume in the administration of family life compared to men. This trend tends to reverse when we explore roles in working life, with men taking a more active role in the responsibility of working and earning money and therefore more susceptible to the existence of WFC [25, 36]. Both WFC and FWC increase significantly as workers move into the parenthood phase, being highest when their youngest children are aged 6–12 years (for WFC) and 2–5 years (for FWC), respectively [28, 37].

Home life and work life are two important fields affecting one another [25]. On the one hand, the number of household members and the age of children affect work life at the same time as family life is affected by the demands of work, and the WFC/FWC theory tends to find support in the mutual relationship between the two spheres of the individual's life. In other words, work disrupts family life (work-to-family conflict) while the family may impede work life (family-to-work conflict), with both conflicts generating negative results in satisfaction with the family situation and with the work situation, respectively [25]. This situation tends to vary between countries, depending on national reconciliation policies [9] and on social and cultural norms associated with women's role in work and family. These authors [9] find a WFC rate in Portuguese mothers of 23% while in fathers the WFC rate is 15%, especially when children are under 12 years old. However, the values of this WFC rate tend to increase when the work is done full-time, and it becomes even more accentuated when the distribution of household chores tends to be unequal between spouses.

In a positive perspective of the work-family relationship, the concept of work-life balance (WLB) emerges, defined as “an overall assessment of the extent to which individuals' effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are consistent with their life values at a given moment” [26]. This concept is thus theoretically and psychometrically distinct from the concept of WFC [21, 35, 38]. However, both concepts are associated with shift work, which is considered to be the driving force behind the improvement of WLB [28, 39] by providing more time for the family and, in particular, for the care of young children and domestic activities. However, other researchers [6, 7, 35, 40, 41] gather evidence that work-life balance is not always achieved among employees in the shift work mode or this is not the main motivation for deciding to work shift work. Williams [6] obtains evidence suggesting that shift workers' satisfaction is higher when fewer hours are worked, i.e., when shift work is done on a part-time basis, considering these workers to be those with the lowest WFC. More recently, Wöhrmann and colleagues [35] found evidence suggesting higher WFC, especially among shift workers working at night or at weekends.

Thus, when WFC occurs, employees' WLB is affected [25, 26]. Erdamar and Demirel [25] tend to associate WFC with job dissatisfaction, marriage, dissatisfaction with life, and greater health problems. As a consequence, these workers accuse greater fatigue, and worse performance and feel less competent at work, feel greater dissatisfaction, and reveal a greater desire for turnover. In turn, FWC affects the employee's health and well-being, especially when there is a lack of support from the spouse or when there is a greater number of domestic responsibilities, presence of children, or a greater number of members in the employee's household [25], leading to lower performance, absenteeism, and job dissatisfaction. In particular, the literature [6, 39, 41] highlights that excessive weekly workload and role overload affect shift workers' work-life balance.

The study of Hu et al. [42] suggests the importance of the work-family enrichment theory [43] as an explanation of the influence that positive experiences at the workplace have on family life. From this work-family enrichment theory, the authors [42] propose the importance of considering interpersonal skills as important resources to explain that work experiences can benefit the family domain and can be facilitators of WLB. This balance can be achieved by changing attitudes to managing interpersonal relationships in the work context having a positive effect on the family context. More recent studies [20, 26, 35, 39] lead shift work researchers to believe that work-life balance may be in jeopardy bringing more benefits to the employer and less to shift workers. Lu and colleagues [42] confirm that shift work increases the pressure of work on family life, as employers tend to demand more from their employees, not only in the number of working hours but also by demanding more ambitious goals.

### ***42.2.2 HR Practices Conciliation and WLB' Outcomes***

HRM is defined in the literature as "the process of attracting, developing, and maintaining a talented and energetic workforce to support organizational mission, objectives, and strategies" [44]. Recent literature [45–48] has been highlighting the need for more agile HRM practices to be promoted to better help meet the challenges arising from the need for greater reconciliation between work and family spheres.

As the adoption of shift work is associated with greater job insecurity [35, 39, 49], employees tend to feel more vulnerable in crisis contexts that may jeopardize their job security. These fears may lead to the development of negative emotions, such as fear, worry, anxiety, and stress [48]. On the other hand, another of the main outcomes of shift work is directly related to the fears that employees have of seeing their career development could be compromised since HRM practices are still very much oriented toward valuing and recognizing employees in the traditional work regime [2, 7, 8, 39, 49]. In a labor environment where uncertainty and turbulence tend to predominate, it is desirable that HRM promotes the implementation of measures to prevent possible disruptions in the workplace [48] and avoid the adoption of talent management and retention practices, namely training and skills development, performance assessment

and management, reward package updates, and organizational career development plans are affected by organizational cost-cutting strategies [48].

Diverse literature [2, 38, 50] suggests that organizations play a crucial role in combating shift workers' demotivation and exhaustion. To this end, it becomes crucial to promote work-to-family reconciliation practices that benefit workers in managing their work and family life. One of these practices involves improving the frequency and quality of communication with employees and avoiding rumors that may negatively affect their work performance and well-being at work [46, 48]. Furthermore, Adamovic and colleagues [45] and Dirani et al. [46] emphasize the importance of communicating with transparency and honesty in order to help employees feel safe and healthy, assigning HRM a central role in guiding employees' needs and offering suggestions for improving employees' well-being in order to reduce emotional and mental malaise caused by feelings of anxiety and stress.

According to some researchers [51], the geographical separation of work and private life may also contribute to the employee's mental well-being, as it implies the separation of both life expectancies. To avoid the development of less desirable behaviors, such as employee absenteeism or turnover, organizations have strived to promote a healthy work environment by developing work-life balance practices centered on the possibility of balanced dedication between the time devoted to work and family life [44, 51]. The implementation of WLB policies has been shown to positively impact the reduction of WFC [44, 52–56], so they should not be neglected.

In addition to these work-to-family reconciliation practices, the literature [2, 7, 27, 40, 44] suggests that organizations promote HRM practices supporting WLB or WFC management understood as spontaneous social benefits, and therefore perceived by employees as an organizational concern for their personal well-being and family situation. However, when the company neglects the concern with maintaining a balance between work and family, the stress of the pressure and demand for roles in both dimensions tends to increase and situations of work-family conflict occur. Some authors [25, 26, 42] suggest that organizations should avoid encouraging overtime work so that these overtime hours do not negatively impact family obligations or compromise the quality of the shift workers' family and personal life since it reduces the time available for the family as well as increases fatigue [25, 57, 58]. Some authors [2, 6, 7, 20, 58] suggest offering canteen services, medical services, the possibility of buying meals at the company, financing the hiring of domestic workers, and encouraging the application for state support. The possibility of greater flexibility in shift schedules can be another important practice to improve the balance between work and family time management, as well as other aspects of the shift worker's personal life [25, 40, 49].

## **42.3 Methodology**

### ***42.3.1 Design***

This study uses a mixed methodology having a cross-sectional and descriptive nature to answer the research question “How does the tourism and hospitality sector promote work-life balance for their shift workers? and What is the shift workers’ perception of their work-life balance?” Therefore, this paper aims to characterize the employees’ work-life balance perception and to know the work-life balance implemented in tourism and hospitality organizations.

### ***42.3.2 Instruments***

In our study, it was used a questionnaire for the quantitative approach and a semi-structured interview for the qualitative approach.

The questionnaire had 40 questions organized in two sections: sociodemographic characterization and work-life balance practices implemented by the organization. Sociodemographic characterization includes questions related to the respondent and open and dichotomous questions in order to characterize the organization. The second section aims to characterize the work-life balance practices implemented by the organization with a set of dichotomous questions.

### ***42.3.3 Sample***

The quantitative sample was a convenience sample with 100 human resources professionals from hotels in the north of Portugal. Regarding the respondents’ characterization, 70% ( $n = 70$ ) of the respondents were women and 30% ( $n = 30$ ) were men. The average age was 45.4 years ( $SD = 9,7$ ), and 72% ( $n = 72$ ) were, at least, undergraduate. According to their training area, 48% ( $n = 48$ ) studied management, 28% ( $n = 28$ ) in tourism, and 24% ( $n = 24$ ) were from several areas such as economy, sciences, and international relations among others. Consequently, 64% ( $n = 64$ ) of the participants had management functions in the organization. They were in this function, at 5.3 years ( $SD = 7$ ).

The qualitative sample was a theoretical sample with 20 employees working in tourism and hospitality organizations. Their mean age was 37 years old, 12 were female and eight were male. All the participants had undergraduate degrees.

### **42.3.4 Procedure and Data Analysis**

The quantitative study was disseminated by e-mail where the study goals were explained. This e-mail was sent by national associations in the hospitality business.

For the organizations interested in participating in the study, the dissemination e-mail had a link to fulfill the questionnaire. Data collection was conducted between 2020 and 2021. For data analysis, we use IBM SPSS Statistics 27.0. Regarding the exploratory and descriptive nature of the study, descriptive analysis was conducted on all the variables.

For the qualitative data, an e-mail was sent explaining the study objectives and asking them to answer the e-mail if were interested in participating. All the interviews were performed in-person, audiotaped, and verbatim transcript. Data were analyzed according to the content analysis procedure [59].

## **42.4 Results**

### **42.4.1 Quantitative Data**

Our study aimed to know the work-life balance practices implemented by tourism and hospitality organizations. Therefore, a set of dichotomous questions were made in order to characterize these practices namely new forms of work organization, direct benefits to employees, and direct benefits to family, motherhood, and fatherhood protection.

Regarding the new forms of work organization, 70% (n = 70) of the participants referred to having schedule flexibility, 76% (n = 76) consider balance needs for the shift schedule, and 56% permit partial work time. Although, for 64% (n = 64) work at home, and telecommuting (72%, n = 72) is not an option.

In the direct benefits to employees, 60% (n = 60) did not have specific measures to support workers with special familiar conditions, and 44% (n = 44) did not provide medical services nor had health insurance (41%, n = 41). Additionally, 85% (n = 85) did not refer to the existence of sports activities for employees nor had special agreements for services in health or culture. In the same way, 70% (n = 70) did not promote activities related to health and wellness.

In direct benefits to family, 84% (n = 84) did not have specific equipment to support employees' sons, 81% (n = 81) did not have agreements with services supporting familiars, and 83% (n = 83) did not have to facilitate agreements for this support. Additionally, they did not provide financial support for the kind garden (86%, n = 86), educational costs (84%, n = 84), or health costs (79%, n = 79).

For motherhood and fatherhood protection, 91% (n = 91) of the hotels consider that men and women had the same rights, respecting their legal orientation. Although 79% (n = 79) did not have any additional financial support, 72% (n = 72) did not

allow a longer period of license than the one defined by law, and 65% (n = 65) of the hotels hire substitutes for employees in motherhood or fatherhood license.

#### **42.4.2 Qualitative Data**

On the other hand, we aimed to characterize the employees' perception of their work-life balance. To achieve this objective qualitative data from tourism and hospitality employees were collected and analyzed according to the content analysis procedure [59]. Our data were organized in the main category—Challenges.

Challenges highlight the main questions that the participants encounter in the balance between their professional and familiar needs. Although there are differences in terms of family structures, several challenges were found to be common to the participants who demonstrate knowledge not only of their own challenges but of challenges common to employees in this activity sector.

This category, challenges, was identified by categorizing the subcodes: difficulty, family, and responsibilities.

In the specific case of challenges in family and socialization challenges, the participants believe that this is the biggest challenge that women who aspire to leadership positions in our country face:

As it is an area that absolves us a lot and that doesn't stop, of course, the issue of family and children and everything else, it's always going to be a challenge and it has no end. It is for life. Not having children, I can only imagine what it will be like to try to reconcile vacations in this vacations in this area with school vacations, for example. It is not impossible, but it is a much more difficult path because this obstacle obviously exists. (Interview 9)

The subcategory difficulties relate to the path of the participants, as well as the difficulties they faced up to the positions they occupy. When asked about difficulties they encountered in their current position, all the participants believe that they face the same difficulties that other professionals would face in the same position:

I don't think I've ever felt that. There are the normal difficulties of any job, but I don't think they are exclusive because I am a woman, if I were a man performing all my functions I would encounter problems and difficulties in the same difficulties in the same proportion that I do...they are the normal difficulties of any job. (Interview 4)

The subcategory family refers to the personal relationships of the participants and the conciliation that they manage to do between their personal life and professional life. This balance is essential for the quality of their professional performances since the participants refer to family and friends as family and friends as major pillars in their lives.

Aware that the profession requires absences, the participants emphasize the importance of understanding and the need for acceptance of this absence by those closest to them. Some participants also mention that they have postponed the decision to start a family since they believe they do not have the availability desired to accompany

their children. This scenario is seen as an obstacle for women to accept leadership positions in our country:

It is not easy to miss birthdays, family gatherings, dinners with friends...while everybody is having fun, we are working...or sleeping to go to work. It is hard to reconcile social life outside of work, that's a fact. But I do not think it is impossible. Instead of going out to dinner on Saturday, we try going out on Tuesday...with flexible and understanding people in our lives, anything is possible. (...) I have been married for some time and I am constantly postponing the decision to have children. My biggest fear is not having time for them. I know that sooner or later it will happen, but I feel that I still have a lot to achieve, to climb up the hierarchy until I make the decision to have children, career always comes first. (Interview 2)

The subcategory responsibilities make reference to the responsibilities of their professional position. Although the participants emphasize that more responsibility, more availability is required.

The people that I work with every day know that there are times when we can all joke around play and more serious moments. The same is true when you take responsibility home. Family evenings can also be affected. I think it's all about the family and the absence that responsibility can bring. (Interview 19)

## 42.5 Discussion and Conclusions

This study yielded four main conclusions which will be discussed theoretically. As a first conclusion, the results suggest that family challenges increase especially when shift workers have higher career development aspirations. Work-family reconciliation challenges tend to be greater when there are young children to care for, among both fathers and mothers, provided that they value work and family life equally. However, if we scrutinize for which gender there are more challenges, participants easily perceive them to be for women. This result is in line with some literature [25, 36, 37] that attributes women with greater involvement in family matters and the upbringing of children, especially in cultures where gender inequality is still quite evident in the management of family responsibilities, as seems to be the case in the Portuguese culture [6, 21, 35, 42]. Second, shift workers recognize that the fact that they have greater professional ambition tends to lead them to make decisions that are harmful to the conciliation between family and work, namely the postponement of starting family life, specifically the decision to become parents. The lack of time to reconcile both spheres of their lives seems to be the main reason [38, 42], perceiving great difficulties in reconciling other spheres of their lives outside the workplace. Then, the participants in the study emphasize that the increase in responsibilities, both in professional and family life, requires greater time availability, thus affecting each other. In other words, when participants perceive that they have greater professional responsibilities, they recognize that they have less time for their family life and vice versa [27, 35, 39]. Finally, at the level of work-family conciliation practices, the organizations involved have already revealed some concerns, especially with the implementation of more flexible forms of work organization (hourly, work, and

space flexibility). However, family-work conciliation practices are totally inexistent, namely the absence of support measures for shift workers with special family conditions, health and welfare services, financial support, or availability of social benefits for the occupation of minor children or even incentives for parenthood. These results are contrary to the recommendations in the literature [2, 6, 7, 20, 35, 58] which underline the importance of social benefits to support the family-work reconciliation and just not the work-family reconciliation.

In this paper, a focus has been placed on the association between conflicts in the reconciliation of employment and family roles. However, no consideration has been given to work-family enrichment and work-family balance as Borgmann et al. [9] recommended.

For future research, we suggest extending this study to other sample profiles that could be interesting. For example, analyzing couples with children, couples without children, and even employees without active family responsibilities and understanding if the family issue is really impacting the conflict or if sociodemographic issues such as gender or age or professional level may be more impacting characteristics on work-to-family reconciliation or if, on the contrary, professional demands such as responsibility, innovation, and creativity may be work factors that impact on disconnection when away from work. The case study methodology may also be relevant in future studies to verify whether concerns with conciliation practices help mitigate this work-to-family conflict, namely regarding working conditions, and relationships with superiors.

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