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Perceived organizational support and well-being of tour guides: The mediating effects of quality of work life

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Abstract

The reciprocity norm theory suggests that individuals develop a sense of obligation and indebtedness to reciprocate the favorable treatment they receive. Rooted in the notion of reciprocity norm, organizational support is regarded as essential for organizations to maintain long-term relationships with their employees. Despite an established academic discussion on organizational support and its outcomes in behavioral and applied psychology research, a comprehensive understanding of its role in enhancing employees' well-being is surprisingly limited in the field of tourism. Drawing on the organizational support theory and theoretical conceptualizations on well-being, the present study proposes a conceptual model linking perceived organizational support (POS) with quality of work life, life satisfaction, and burnout. Using data from 301 tour guides, the results show that POS enhances tour guides' quality of work life and reduces their levels of burnout. The findings also show that while POS does not have a direct effect on life satisfaction, this effect emerges mediated by the quality of work life. As predicted, quality of work life was found as a key antecedent of life satisfaction. The current study highlights the role of POS in enhancing the well-being of tour guides and shows how well-being at the workplace is associated with well-being in life.

KEYWORDS

life satisfaction, perceived organizational support, quality of work life, subjective well-being, tour guiding, tourism employees

1 | INTRODUCTION

According to the organizational support theory (OST), employees who perceive their organizations as valuing their contributions and caring about their well-being will reciprocate with favorable attitudes and desirable behavior toward their organizations (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Rockstuhl et al., 2020). This win-win relationship has gained considerable academic attention since the groundbreaking work of Eisenberger et al. (1986), with abundant research highlighting the favorable outcomes of perceived

organizational support (POS) including job satisfaction, job embeddedness, organizational commitment, and organization-based self-esteem (Ahmed & Nawaz, 2015; Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2020). POS enhances employees' self-identification with the organization resulting in employees' viewing gains and losses of their organizations as their own (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Recent tourism research also acknowledges the role of POS in bringing about positive outcomes both for organizations and employees (Akgunduz et al., 2018; Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Alrawadieh et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020).

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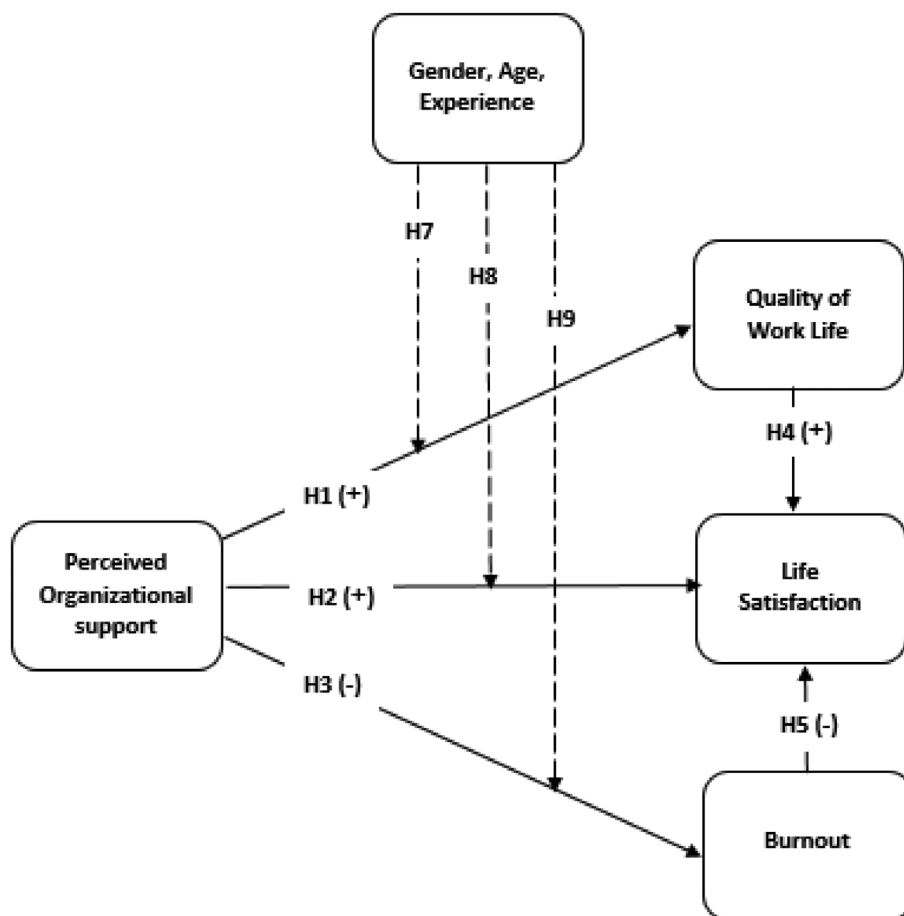
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Despite valuable contributions, there is a notable paucity of research addressing how employees' perception of organizational support can enhance their well-being in the workplace and their well-being in life. Kurtessis et al. (2017) noted the paucity of quantitative research addressing the intersections between POS and other variables, including employees' well-being. With these knowledge gaps in mind, the purpose of this study is to empirically test a conceptual model linking POS, quality of work life, life satisfaction, and burnout. The proposed framework shows that POS has a direct positive effect on quality of work life and life satisfaction, and a direct negative effect on burnout. The model also depicts quality of work life as a mediator between POS and life satisfaction (see Figure 1). By empirically assessing these relationships, the study aims to provide practitioners in the travel industry (e.g., travel agencies, tour operators) with insights into how to harness POS as a mean to improve tour guides' quality of work life, enhance their subjective well-being, and mitigate work-related stressors (e.g., burnout).

The study contributes to literature focusing on the well-being of tourism employees in several ways. First, by modeling POS with quality of work life and life satisfaction, the present study extends our understanding of the consequences of POS that go beyond organizational variables such as job performance or employee retention (Ahmed & Nawaz, 2015). This is important given the paucity of

theoretical assessments examining the role of organizational support in shaping employees' psychological well-being (Newman et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2020). Second, by modeling both the quality of work life and life satisfaction, the study bridges well-being research in two distinct but intercorrelated domains; work life and non-work life. As noted by Erdogan et al. (2012), life satisfaction is largely ignored in management research with a bias toward job satisfaction while the life satisfaction literature has equally ignored the work domain. Third, while existing research tends to examine POS as a moderator (Asghar et al., 2021; Cheng & Yi, 2018) or mediator variable (Ahmad & Zafar, 2018; Cheung, 2013), the present study models POS as an independent variable that can potentially be an antecedent of favorable outcomes effecting the very well-being of tourism employees. Finally, the present study makes an incremental contribution by drawing on data collected from tour guides, an important professional segment in the travel industry that has been scarcely subject to empirical investigation (Chen et al., 2018). Needless to say, this study comes at a time when both current (Kim et al., 2021) and prospective tourism employees (Demirdelen Alrawadieh, 2021) are vulnerable to much strain and anxiety due to the current pandemic and, as such, the importance of organizational support becomes even more salient.

In sum, the key objective of this study is to assess a theoretical model that postulates relationships between POS, quality of work life,



H6: POS → Quality of Work Life → Life Satisfaction.

FIGURE 1 Conceptual framework and hypothesized relationships

life satisfaction, and burnout. In the subsequent sections, the main concepts of the study are reviewed followed by the method, findings, and implications of the findings.

2 | LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 | Organizational support theory

The OST (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011) suggests that employees develop an overall perception regarding the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Rockstuhl et al., 2020). Meta-analytic evidence confirms the positive role of POS in gendering employees' favorable attitudes (e.g., job satisfaction) and enhancing desirable behaviors (e.g., task performance) (Kurtessis et al., 2017). This assumption is rooted in the notion of reciprocity norm (Gouldner, 1960) whereby employees tend to invest their resources in their organizations which can fulfill their needs (Eisenberger et al., 2004). POS is shaped and enhanced by several antecedents including favorable working conditions, supervisor and coworker support, participation in decision making, fairness, growth opportunity, and error tolerance (Ahmed & Nawaz, 2015; Allen et al., 2003; Kurtessis et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2020).

Since the seminal work of Eisenberger et al. (1986), OST was applied extensively in organizational behavior and applied psychology research (Bergeron & Thompson, 2020; Eder & Eisenberger, 2008; Stamper & Johlke, 2003). Although limited, research in the realm of tourism and hospitality also provides evidence of the favorable impact of POS on a wide range of employees' work attitudes and behaviors including work meaningfulness (Akgunduz et al., 2018), job embeddedness (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017), and organization-based self-esteem (Wang et al., 2020). In the context of tour guiding, POS is considered important in preventing tour guides from undesirable incidents such as sexual harassment (Alrawadieh et al., 2021). However, little is known about how POS can influence tour guides' quality of work life and life satisfaction.

2.2 | Quality of work life and life satisfaction

Quality of work life is conceptualized as "employee satisfaction with a variety of needs through resources, activities, and outcomes stemming from participation in the workplace" (Sirgy et al., 2001, p. 242). Satisfaction with and commitment to the job are the key two indicators of quality of work life (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991). In other words, quality of work life is a broad construct with job satisfaction being only one dimension (Erdogan et al., 2012). As suggested by the spillover theory (Wilensky, 1960), individuals' experiences in work life spills over influencing their life in other domains (e.g., social life, family life, leisure life). In this sense, quality of work life is also a key predictor of satisfaction in other life domains (Sirgy et al., 2001) which perhaps explains the growing academic interest in life satisfaction of employees.

Conceptualized as a cognitive judgmental process involving individuals' assessment of their overall quality of life (Diener et al., 1985), life satisfaction is intercorrelated and sometimes interchangeably used with other concepts including happiness and subjective well-being. However, there exist salient differences among these concepts. Eger and Maridal's (2015) meta-analytic review shows that happiness and life satisfaction are the major components underpinning subjective well-being, with the former being described as a momentary state of wellbeing, while the latter is associated with cognitive assessment for happiness over longer periods of time. Despite the nuanced difference between happiness and life satisfaction, scrutinizing factors influencing life satisfaction is important to understand what makes individuals happy (Erdogan et al., 2012).

Quality of work life, and to a lesser extent, life satisfaction have received growing attention in tourism research. Previous studies show that quality of work life and life satisfaction of tourism employees are predicted by a wide range of factors including type of leadership, organizational embeddedness, and corporate social responsibility practices (Ampofo et al., 2021; Kara et al., 2013; Kim et al., 2017, 2021). The well-being of tour guides is worth particular attention. Inherent characteristics of tour guiding, such as future uncertainty and unstable income, can create anxiety (Chen & Chang, 2020). Acknowledging these distinct characteristics, Alrawadieh et al. (2020) investigated tour guides' quality of work life and life satisfaction from an emotional labor perspective, however, their data largely failed to support the theoretical framework proposed indicating the need for more research into this area.

3 | HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

The role of POS in enhancing employees' well-being is acknowledged (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). From an organizational perspective, POS is influential in determining how satisfied employees are with a variety of needs related to their jobs. In this vein, previous research alludes to a positive relationship between POS and employees' perceptions of their quality of work life. For instance, Akgunduz et al. (2018) found that hotel employees who perceive greater organizational support are more likely to view their jobs as meaningful. Wang et al. (2020) advocate that POS can enhance organization-based self-esteem. In their meta-analytic review, Ahmed and Nawaz (2015) identified job satisfaction, a key component of quality of work life, as a major outcome of POS. When employees perceive their organizations as appreciating their contributions and caring about their well-being, they develop a favorable orientation toward their work and the organization, which eventually results in a positive work experience (Kurtessis et al., 2017) and a higher quality of work life (Kim et al., 2017). Based on the aforementioned discussion, the following hypothesis is developed:

H1. *POS enhances tour guides' quality of work life.*

The outcomes of POS are not restricted to the organizational ecosystem, but may go beyond the work environment to involve

outcomes related to individuals' very personal life. According to Kurtessis et al. (2017), organizational support fulfills socioemotional needs resulting in enhanced psychological well-being. While existing empirical studies tend to affirm the indirect effect of POS on the psychological well-being of tourism employees (Newman et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2020), we argue that POS can potentially act as an antecedent that directly effects life satisfaction in a positive way. This realization is not illogical considering that individuals would presumably be more satisfied in life when they feel appreciated for what they do. This notion is also confirmed in a recent meta-analytic study by Zhao et al. (2020). In sum, it is plausible to assume that tour guides internalize POS influencing their cognitive assessment of their overall quality of life. Based on the preceding discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2. POS enhances tour guides' life satisfaction.

Previous research also acknowledges the critical role of POS in mitigating workplace-related stressors (Abubakar et al., 2021; Kang et al., 2010; Sen et al., 2021; Stamper & Johlke, 2003). Burnout is viewed as a key stressor that largely emerges when supportive resources, meant for coping with the demands of work, are absent or limited (Kurtessis et al., 2017). According to the Conservation of Resources theory (COR) (Hobfoll, 1989), POS enables individuals to build resource reservoirs to use when confronted with stressors such as burnout. Therefore, one may safely assume that the more employees perceive their organizations as supportive, the less they experience burnout. This discussion frames the following hypothesis:

H3. POS is negatively associated with burnout.

A considerable amount of research examines the relationship between quality of work life and life satisfaction (Alrawadieh et al., 2020; Erdogan et al., 2012; Kara et al., 2013; Sirgy et al., 2001). The causal direction between these two constructs is, however, subject to some controversy, with some arguing the former as an antecedent of the latter and others proposing the former as an outcome of the latter (see Sirgy et al., 2001). Based on Bowling et al.'s (2010) meta-analytic review and in line with the spillover hypothesis (Wilensky, 1960), we propose a causal path from quality of work life to life satisfaction. In other words, the greater the tour guides perceive their work as being rewarding on different levels, the greater they are satisfied in their life in general. Empirical evidence supports this notion across different contexts (Kara et al., 2013; Kara et al., 2018) including tour guiding (Alrawadieh et al., 2020). Hence, the following hypothesis is developed:

H4. Quality of work life is positively associated with life satisfaction.

Abundant empirical evidence confirms the negative impact of burnout on employee life satisfaction (Hayes & Weathington, 2007; Kara et al., 2013). In a recent study, Alrawadieh et al. (2021) suggested

that female tour guides' increased levels of burnout was associated with decreased life satisfaction. Hence, we argue that the greater amount that tour guides experience burnout, the less likely they will be satisfied in their life. Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5. Burnout has a negative impact on life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction is a complex concept and understanding its antecedents requires examining both direct and indirect effects of other variables. One popular way to understand the underlying mechanism explaining the relationship between two variables is testing for mediating effects (Zhao et al., 2010). As depicted in Figure 1, quality of work life is proposed to mediate the relationship between POS and life satisfaction. Quality of work life was employed as a mediator in some other studies (Asante Boadi et al., 2020). Erdogan et al. (2012) predicted that the quality of work life would mediate the role of work-related variables on life satisfaction. In their study, Dixon and Sagas (2007) and Newman et al. (2015) found that job satisfaction, as key a component of quality of work life, mediated the POS-life satisfaction relationship. However, to the best of the authors' knowledge, no empirical study has employed quality of work life as a mediator in the POS-life satisfaction relationship. Based on the aforementioned discussion, the following hypothesis is developed:

H6. Quality of work life mediates the relationship between POS and life satisfaction.

Finally, the present study proposes age, gender, and work experience as potential moderators of the relationships between POS on the one hand, and quality of work life, life satisfaction, and burnout on the other hand. In terms of age and inherently, to some extent, work experience, considerable empirical evidence shows that age can influence employees' attitudes toward their jobs (Loscocco & Roschelle, 1991; Rhodes, 1983). It may be plausible to argue that supportiveness on the part of the organization is more important for younger employees than for older employees who, backed with inherent long experience and independency, may be less attentive to organizational support. This notion was supported in Kurtessis et al.'s (2017) meta-analytic review. Specifically, they noted that the relationship between POS and job satisfaction was found weaker among older employees. With regard to gender, previous studies highlight the role of gender in reciprocity research (Kolyesnikova et al., 2009; Ng & Feldman, 2015). Specifically, there is some evidence alluding that women are more likely than men to reciprocate favorable treatment (Buchan et al., 2008). Hence, compared to men, women may be more sensitive and attentive to organizational support. Indeed, Clark et al. (2017) suggested that men and women may respond differently to supportiveness in the workplace. However, previous findings seem to be inconsistent on the role of gender in moderating the relationships between POS and other variables. For instance, Kurtessis et al. (2017) employed gender and age as possible moderators of POS–outcome relationships. Their findings indicate that the

strength of the relationships vary based on age but not gender. This highlights the need for more empirical investigation on the potential moderating effect of different demographic. In sum, we expect POS to have a greater effect on quality of work life, life satisfaction, and burnout for young female employees with low work experience. Based on the aforementioned discussion, we propose the following hypotheses:

H7. *The impact of POS on quality of work life is stronger among (a) young (b) female tour guides with (c) low work experience.*

H8. *The impact of POS on life satisfaction is stronger among (a) young (b) female tour guides with (c) low work experience.*

H9. *The impact of POS on burnout is stronger among (a) young (b) female tour guides with (c) low work experience.*

4 | METHOD

4.1 | Study context

Data for the present study was collected from official tour guides in Turkey. By February 2020, the total number of tour guides was 11,060, of which a considerable minority (2163 or 19.5%) were non-active. Currently, there are 13 Tour Guides Chambers in Turkey with more than half of the active tour guides being registered to two of them: Istanbul Chamber of Tour Guides (IRO) and Antalya Chamber of Tour Guides (ARO) (Union of Turkish Tourist Guides, 2020). Tour guides are either national (i.e., authorized to accompany tours all over the country) or regional (i.e., restricted to specific region[s] within Turkey). Obtaining the license to practice tour guiding in Turkey requires candidates to either have an undergraduate degree in tour guiding or a certificate issued by the Union of Turkish Tourist Guides following the completion of an educational program organized by the Union.

4.2 | Survey instrument

Multiple-item scales adopted from previous research were used to measure the constructs employed in the present study. POS was measured using six items adapted from Shanock and Eisenberger (2006). The items were slightly modified to fit the context of tour guiding. Quality of work life was measured using 16 items adapted from Sirgy et al. (2001). Based on need satisfaction and spillover theories, this measurement has been significantly adopted in previous research. Given the focus of the present study and in line with previous studies (e.g., Kim et al., 2021), the quality of work life was operationalized as a unidimensional, rather than a multidimensional variable. Life

satisfaction was measured using five items adapted from Diener et al. (1985). Finally, Burnout was measured using six items adapted from Babakus et al. (2009). All the above-mentioned scales were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample of 30 students enrolled in an undergraduate tour guiding program in a major university in Istanbul, Turkey. An expert panel (three tourism faculty colleagues and three tour guides) was also asked to review the survey and provide feedback. The pilot study and the expert panel review resulted in minimal changes.

4.3 | Sampling and data collection

For the present study, data was collected from official tour guides in Turkey. By February 2020, there were 8897 active (practicing) tour guides. To qualify for this study, respondents should be active tour guides who have worked for at least 1 year. Data collection was initially planned to involve field visits to major attractions in Istanbul where potential tour guides would be approached when they had free time. However, this was impeded due to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, reaching potential respondents was possible by adopting an online survey approach. First, all Tour Guides Chambers in Turkey were contacted and asked to pass the survey link to their affiliated members. Interestingly (and perhaps understandably given internal procedures and the large amount of research and data collection targeting tour guides in Turkey), collaboration was very limited. Having considerable work experience in the field, the authors used their networks to reach to potential respondents. A snowball sampling technique was also used to ensure a sufficient sample size. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. The data collection began on February 4, and ended on May 13, 2020 resulting in 301 valid questionnaires. The sample size was assessed by a statistical power analysis G*Power 3 (Faul et al., 2009). It was found that a minimum sample of 134 respondents was sufficient to achieve a minimum power of 0.80 at the 95% confidence level, for an anticipated medium effect size. Thus, the sample size in the present study meets and far exceeds the minimum required sample size.

4.4 | Data analysis

To test the proposed model, partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed. PLS-SEM performs well with both small and large samples and also does not require the assumptions of normality to be met (Hair et al., 2017). An examination of the skewness and kurtosis scores for the dataset revealed that the lowest score was for one item of quality of work life (Kurtosis = -1.004) and the highest score was for one item of quality of work life (Kurtosis = 2.461). Several other scores were outside the range of ± 1 indicating some violations of the normality assumption. The model was estimated using SmartPLS 3.3.3.

5 | FINDINGS

5.1 | Demographics of the sample

As shown in Table 1, around two-thirds of the participants were male whose ages were under 44 and a slight majority were married (51.5%). In terms of their working experience, participants were highly experienced tour guides with around 42% having worked for more than 10 years. The sample is notably highly educated with around 32% having a master's or PhD degree. Most respondents (79%) were single-language licensed with English being the top language, followed by Spanish and German.

5.2 | Measurement model assessment

Before assessing the structural model, the reliability and validity of the measurements were assessed. As shown in Table 2, after dropping seven items from the quality of work life scale, composite reliability (CR) of all the scales were above the recommended threshold of 0.7. Item loadings of 0.6 and above were retained as they should be dropped only when they negatively affect the evaluation of other psychometric properties (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2017). All Cronbach's alpha (α), rho_A, and CR values were above the minimum threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017) indicating all items and constructs were internally consistent. Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE) for each latent variable. Given that all scores were above the recommended 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017), convergent validity was also established.

Discriminant validity was also assessed using two methods. First, the square root of AVE for latent constructs with the correlations among them were compared (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

Second, as a superior approach to Fornell and Larcker's method (Henseler et al., 2015), the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was used to test for discriminant validity. As seen in Table 3, all inter-construct correlations are less than the square of AVE (shown in bold) and all the HTMT ratios were below the threshold of 0.85, indicating adequate discriminant validity.

Finally, the goodness-of-fit was assessed using Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value. While a value less than 0.08 generally indicates a good fit (Hair et al., 2017), SRMR value in the present study was 0.08 for the saturated and 0.09 for the estimated model indicating a mediocre fit (MacCallum et al., 1996). It should be noted, however, that Goodness-of-fit in PLS-SEM is still open to methodological assessments and thus "any thresholds advocated in the literature should be considered as very tentative" (Hair et al., 2019, p. 7).

5.3 | Structural model assessment

To test the hypothesized relationships, path estimates and their corresponding *t* values were calculated using a bootstrapping procedure with 5000 subsamples. The structural model confirmed five of the six hypotheses proposed (Table 4). A strong and positive relationship was found between POS and quality of work life ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting H1. However, no statistical evidence was found to support the proposed positive impact of POS on life satisfaction (H2). H3 was supported given that a negative relationship was found between POS and burnout ($\beta = -0.37$, $p < 0.01$). A significant positive relationship also existed between quality of work life and life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.49$, $p < 0.01$), thus supporting H4. Finally,

Gender	N	%	Marital status	N	%
Male	196	65.1	Single	137	45.5
Female	105	34.9	Married	155	51.5
Total	301	100.0	Other	9	3.0
			Total	301	100.0
Age					
18–24 years old	10	3.3	Work experience	N	%
25–34 years old	112	37.2	2 years or less	63	20.9
35–44 years old	85	28.3	3–6 years	61	20.3
45–54 years old	69	22.9	7–10 years	51	16.9
55 and above	25	8.3	11–15 years	59	19.6
Total	301	100.0	16 and above	67	22.3
			Total	301	100.0
Education					
High school graduate or less	6	2.0			
College graduate	38	12.6			
Bachelor's degree	161	53.5			
Master's degree	67	22.3			
Doctoral degree	29	9.6			
Total	301	100.0			

TABLE 1 Profile of participants

TABLE 2 Measurement model assessment

Construct	λ	α	Rho_A	CR	AVE
<i>Burnout</i>		0.824	0.867	0.868	0.525
Bu1: I feel emotionally drained from my work.	0.772				
Bu2: I feel used up at the end of the workday.	0.764				
Bu3: I feel burned out from my work.	0.829				
Bu4: I feel I treat some customers as if they are impersonal "objects."	0.665				
Bu5: I feel I have become uncaring toward people since I took this job.	0.648				
Bu6: I worry that this job is hardening me emotionally.	0.648				
<i>Life satisfaction</i>		0.849	0.867	0.892	0.624
LS1: In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	0.680				
LS2: The conditions of my life are excellent.	0.826				
LS3: I am satisfied with my life.	0.858				
LS4: So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	0.816				
LS5: If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing.	0.755				
<i>Perceived organizational support</i>		0.895	0.897	0.920	0.657
POS1: The travel agency values my contribution to its well-being.	0.760				
POS2: The travel agency strongly considers my goals and values.	0.848				
POS3: The travel agency really cares about my well-being.	0.849				
POS4: The travel agency is willing to help me when I need a special favor.	0.821				
POS5: The travel agency shows very little concern for me (R).	0.803				
POS6: The travel agency takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	0.777				
<i>Quality of work life</i>		0.875	0.881	0.900	0.501
QWL6: My job does well for my family.	0.649				
QWL9: I feel appreciated at my work.	0.739				
QWL10: People at my travel agency and/or within my profession respect me as a professional and an expert in my field of work.	0.686				
QWL11: I feel that my job allows me to realize my full potential.	0.783				
QWL12: I feel that I am realizing my potential as an expert in my line of work.	0.751				
QWL13: I feel that I'm always learning new things that help do my job better.	0.615				
QWL14: This job allows me to sharpen my professional skills.	0.747				
QWL15: There is a lot of creativity involved in my job.	0.684				
QWL16: My job helps me develop my creativity outside of work.	0.699				

a significant and negative relationship was found between burnout and life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.17, p < 0.01$), thus supporting H5.

The proposed theoretical model purports that quality of work life mediates the relationship between POS and life

satisfaction. According to Zhao et al. (2010), mediation exists if the bootstrapped indirect effects are significant and the confidence interval does not include the value of zero. The results reveal that quality of work life fully mediated the relationship

TABLE 3 Discriminant analysis

Fornell–Larcker criterion				
	1	2	3	4
Burnout	0.725			
Life satisfaction	−0.460	0.790		
Perceived organizational support	−0.376	0.491	0.810	
Quality of work life	−0.509	0.646	0.655	0.708
HTMT ₈₅ Criterion				
	1	2	3	4
Burnout				
Life satisfaction	0.499			
Perceived organizational support	0.402	0.543		
Quality of work life	0.565	0.730	0.715	

TABLE 4 Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Beta	t value	p values	Decision
H1: Perceived organizational support → Quality of work life	0.655	19.804**	0.000	Supported
H2: Perceived organizational support → Life satisfaction	0.105	1.705	0.089	Not supported
H3: Perceived organizational support → Burnout	−0.376	8.277**	0.000	Supported
H4: Quality of work life → Life satisfaction	0.490	6.975**	0.000	Supported
H5: Burnout → Life satisfaction	−0.171	2.878**	0.004	Supported
H6: Perceived organizational support → Quality of work life → Life satisfaction	0.321	6.795**	0.000	Supported

** $p < 0.01$. * $p < 0.5$.

between POS and life satisfaction ($p < 0.000$, BCa CI: [0.227–0.417]).

5.4 | Multi-group analysis

Multi-group analysis (MGA) was conducted to assess whether these variables would determine the differences in the strength and significance of the causal effects in the model. MGA was used given that the moderators are categorical in nature (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). For gender, the entire dataset was divided into male ($n = 196$) and female ($n = 106$), for age, the dataset was divided into younger ($n = 122$ [18–34 years]) and older ($n = 179$ [>35]), whereas for work experience, the dataset was divided into low experience ($n = 63$ [<2 years]) and high experience ($n = 238$ [>3 years]). Contrary to predication, the results show that these variables had no moderating effect on the proposed relationships and therefore H7, H8, and H9 were not supported (see Table 5).

6 | DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

The well-being of tourism employees and, to a greater extent, the well-being of tour guides have received little attention. Specifically,

previous theoretical assessments appear to have paid little attention to the role of POS in enhancing tourism employees' well-being and reducing job-related stressors (Alrawadieh et al., 2021). Drawing on the OST and theoretical conceptualizations on well-being, the present study sets itself to propose and test a conceptual model linking POS, quality of work life, life satisfaction, and burnout. The theoretical model was assessed using data from professional tour guides in Turkey. Based on the study's findings, significant theoretical and practical implications are presented.

6.1 | Theoretical implications

The findings of the present study largely support the proposed theoretical model. Specifically, POS is found to have a positive and significant impact on tour guides' quality of work life while also having a negative and significant impact on their levels of burnout. Interestingly, while the results fail to confirm the proposed positive impact of POS on life satisfaction, they show that quality of work life serves as an underlying mechanism to explain this positive impact. Finally, perception of quality of work life is found strongly related to life satisfaction.

In line with previous research, POS proved to positively influence tour guides' quality of work life (Akgunduz et al., 2018) while also

TABLE 5 Results of the multi-group analysis

	Male <i>n</i> = 196		Female <i>n</i> = 106		Diff	
	Path	<i>p</i> value	Path	<i>p</i> value	Path	<i>p</i> value
POS → QWL	0.633**	0.000	0.694**	0.000	0.385 n.s	0.633
POS → LS	0.145 n.s	0.047	0.085 n.s	0.438	0.637 n.s	0.145
POS → BU	−0.327**	0.000	−0.469**	0.000	0.144 n.s	−0.327
QWL → LS	0.424**	0.000	0.618**	0.000	0.173 n.s	0.424
BU → LS	−0.231**	0.000	−0.047 n.s	0.615	0.104 n.s	−0.231
	Younger <i>n</i> = 122		Older <i>n</i> = 179		Diff	
	Path	<i>p</i> value	Path	<i>p</i> value	Path	<i>p</i> value
POS → QWL	0.686**	0.000	0.628**	0.000	0.430 n.s	0.686
POS → LS	0.100 n.s	0.360	0.112 n.s	0.174	0.917 n.s	0.100
POS → BU	−0.474**	0.000	−0.320**	0.000	0.100 n.s	−0.474
QWL → LS	0.543**	0.000	0.438**	0.000	0.432 n.s	0.543
BU → LS	−0.142 n.s	0.138	−0.186**	0.005	0.704 n.s	−0.142
	Low experience <i>n</i> = 63		High experience <i>n</i> = 238		Diff	
	Path	<i>p</i> value	Path	<i>p</i> value	Path	<i>p</i> value
POS → QWL	0.579**	0.000	0.679**	0.000	0.244 n.s	0.579
POS → LS	0.045 n.s	0.737	0.131 n.s	0.092	0.579 n.s	0.045
POS → BU	−0.430**	0.000	−0.374**	0.000	0.575 n.s	−0.430
QWL → LS	0.636**	0.000	0.447**	0.000	0.214 n.s	0.636
BU → LS	−0.070 n.s	0.536**	−0.206**	0.001	0.299 n.s	−0.070

Abbreviations: BU, burnout; LS, life satisfaction; n.s, non-significant; POS, perceived organizational support; QWL, quality of work life.

***p* < 0.01. **p* < 0.5.

decreasing their levels of burnout (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Yet, in contrast to Zhao et al.'s (2020) meta-analytic study, our data fails to support the hypothesized positive effect of POS on life satisfaction. However, when mediated by quality of work life, this effect emerges. This finding is largely consistent with those reported in studies by Newman et al. (2015) and Dixon and Sagas (2007) which propose that POS does not have a direct impact on life satisfaction, but indirect impact through job satisfaction. In sum, our findings indicate that, through POS, organizations can contribute to their employees' well-being (Wang et al., 2020). This also lends support to the notion that work experiences and work context could influence life satisfaction through quality of work life (Erdogan et al., 2012).

The findings also reveal that as a key dimension of subjective well-being, life satisfaction is enhanced by quality of work life and is likely to degrade by burnout. These findings are in line with the spillover theory (Wilensky, 1960) and support several other empirical works related to the effects of quality of work life (Alrawadieh et al., 2020; Kara et al., 2013) and burnout (Kara et al., 2013) on tourism employees' life satisfaction.

The study makes a number of theoretical contributions. First, it echoes calls for more research investigating the intersection between POS and employee well-being (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Specifically, the study contributes to the OST by demonstrating how POS can bring about social benefits to tour guides. Previous research seems to have focused on the organizational outcomes of POS (Akgunduz

et al., 2018; Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017; Kurtessis et al., 2017) neglecting life satisfaction. Second, as noted by Erdogan et al.'s (2012, p. 1039) review, "although adults spend a majority of their adult lifetime working, what social sciences have uncovered about life satisfaction mostly comes from studies of nonworking populations." By employing life satisfaction as a criterion variable, the study contributes to research addressing antecedents of employee life satisfaction as a key indicator of subjective well-being (Erdogan et al., 2012). Relatedly, while well-being research in tourism focuses on tourists and host communities, the present study shifts attention to the well-being of tourism employees thus contributing to a scant yet flourishing body of research (Alrawadieh et al., 2020, 2021). Third, the study also makes a contextual contribution by focusing on tour guides, an under-studied segment in tourism research (Chen et al., 2018) and a profession with distinct vocational characteristics (Chen & Chang, 2020). Finally, most research on tour guiding is apparently centered around their roles and the quality of their services (Mak et al., 2010; Weiler & Black, 2015), research addressing tour guides from an organizational perspective is however limited (Cetin & Yarcin, 2017).

6.2 | Practical implications

The present study highlights the role of POS in enhancing tour guides' quality of work life and reducing their levels of burnout. An obvious

implication is that travel agencies and tour operators need to acknowledge supportiveness as a tool to enhance the well-being of their tour guides. Poor quality of work life and burnout can often be costly to businesses (Kurtessis et al., 2017). Thus, providing support should also be viewed as a strategy to enhance a healthy and long-term employee-organization relationship. To communicate support to tour guides, travel agencies and tour operators should embrace a supportive leadership style that involves fair and favorable treatment, error tolerance, and enhanced working conditions. Involving tour guides in the decision-making process instrumentally (e.g., itinerary designation) or symbolically (e.g., encouraging them to provide feedback on various operations) would presumably enhance greater perception of organizational support. Human resources practices in travel trade businesses should view organizational support as a significant compensation resource to reduce work-related stressors such as burnout. These HR practices may consider designing and implementing policies and rewarding systems as means of recognition of tour guides' contributions and as a sign of care for their well-being.

The findings reveal a strong and positive impact of quality of work life on the life satisfaction of tour guides. By the inherent nature of their job, tour guides work in leisure and their role in creating positive experiences is widely acknowledged (Cetin & Yarcin, 2017), therefore, practitioners in the travel industry who acknowledge the notion of the happy-productive worker should focus on enhancing the quality of work life of their affiliated tour guides as a path to business success. This can be achieved by fulfilling the economic and socioemotional needs of tour guides. This is especially important in the post-Covid era since many tour guides, as other tourism employees, have been subject to massive uncertainty and anxiety.

6.3 | Limitations and areas of future research

The study concludes with a number of limitations and directions for future research. First, the data collection process coincided with the outbreak of Covid-19. The first confirmed case in Turkey was announced in the second week of March, over 1 month after the data collection starting date. Due to the sudden nature of the pandemic, it was impossible, for technical reasons, to compare the data before and after the outbreak of Covid-19. Hence, similar studies in the future, when tourism sees full recovery, are needed to validate the proposed relationships. Second, the study employs unidimensional variables. There is an opportunity to refine the proposed model by looking into how different dimensions or types of POS can influence tour guides' well-being on different aspects (e.g., affective well-being, cognitive well-being). Finally, acknowledging the distinct characteristics of tour guiding that single it out from other jobs within tourism and hospitality, it may be interesting to examine the attributes or factors that shape their perceptions of organizational support.

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DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data available on request from the authors.

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