

A reward mechanism for burnout reduction in family-owned restaurants

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Abstract

Purpose – Burnout has been a hidden cause affecting well-being, work capacity and job turnover in various service industries. Many hospitality service industries, including family-owned restaurants, are trying to find an effective mechanism for burnout reduction that can revive their workforce's energy to work and serve their customers continuously. To solve this issue, this research proposes a reward mechanism for burnout reduction, aiming to examine the links between rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), stress, motivation, satisfaction and workers' burnout.

Design/methodology/approach – 500 questionnaires were distributed to survey workers in family-owned restaurants located in tourist areas of Thailand. With 335 valid responses, a path analysis method was applied to analyze these data.

Findings – This research found that intrinsic and extrinsic rewards significantly influenced workers' motivation. Meanwhile, work motivation and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards significantly influence workers' stress. Then, job stress and work motivation significantly influenced workers' satisfaction. Moreover, stress and satisfaction, except for work motivation, showed significant associations with workers' burnout in family-owned restaurants. Finally, this research found that job satisfaction acted as the mediator between work motivation and burnout.

Originality/value – This research offers a reward mechanism for burnout reduction, which helps entrepreneurs and HR managers to apply intrinsic and extrinsic rewards as incentives, promoting positive work attitudes so that it can minimize burnout in family-owned restaurants.

Keywords Rewards, Burnout, Satisfaction, Stress, Motivation, Restaurants

Paper type Research article

Introduction

One of the economic principles mentions that people respond to incentives (Mankiw, 2019). Likewise, rewards can be one of the incentives that attract not only workers' attention but also their willingness to perform their duties (Madhani and Dean, 2020). Firms can provide two types of rewards, namely, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, to their workers (Venketsamy and Lew, 2024). Intrinsic rewards give workers emotional and psychological incentives, making them see their jobs as meaningful and feel proud to perform their duties, while extrinsic rewards give workers external incentives (e.g. money, bonuses or gifts) to boost their self-esteem in performing their duties. Providing rewards to workers can promote high work morale, which makes workers invest their emotional and physical energy to perform their work. Prior research revealed that giving rewards to workers can promote work motivation



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(Bandhu *et al.*, 2024) and job satisfaction (Hofmans *et al.*, 2013), which leads to offsetting job stress (Fremling *et al.*, 2025). With these positive attitudes, workers are likely to pledge their hard work and dedication to complete all assigned workloads, leading to better work productivity for the firms. Unquestionably, giving rewards to workers can make them become enthusiastic to perform their duties, improving their overall work performance outcomes. To boost working morale among workers, a reward mechanism has to be developed.

Meanwhile, family-owned restaurants are categorized into small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Burns, 2024). Despite its size, a large number of these types of restaurants are open in almost every corner of the country. These restaurants have played a large role in promoting economic growth (Lonestarnzseo, 2023) and employment opportunities for many people, especially the family-owned restaurants operated in the tourist areas (Eaglen, 2006; Matson, 2022). The success of these restaurants relies significantly on their main workforce, who work as waiters and waitresses serving services to customers directly (Davies, 2023). Their roles are to welcome customers, receive customers' orders, record and deliver food and drinks, observe and solve customer complaints, have flexibility and positive attitudes, and promote business activities with the owners (Byk, 2023). Furthermore, working in family-owned restaurants often requires all workers to do tasks beyond the daily tasks, such as controlling supply chain management, placing supply orders, cleaning the restaurants and being disciplined (e.g. the first person in and the last person out). Workers have to perform multi-tasking to provide satisfactory service experiences to their customers, which allows the restaurants to attract more customers and gain more profits. However, these unclear roles in family-owned restaurants have been seen as a critical point to "work professionalism" in this industry, where workers may experience a chaotic and toxic work environment in the restaurant industry (Burns, 2024). Consequently, this can result in stressful moments for all workers. The prolonging of this situation can create a new symptom, "Burnout", which can cause emotional and physical tiredness, affecting working morale among workers (Kim and Majjan, 2024; Maslach and Jackson, 1981). Subsequently, there is a significant alert in job turnover among the workers, leading to labor shortages that can affect the performance of the family-owned restaurants. Therefore, finding an effective method to minimize burnout is essential to all family-owned restaurants.

According to the researchers' best knowledge, previous studies have developed reward systems for burnout reduction, concentrating on the effects of monetary rewards (Choi *et al.*, 2012), emotional and material rewards (Koo *et al.*, 2020), an effort-reward balance (Alvarado *et al.*, 2021), an effort-reward imbalance (Zhang *et al.*, 2024a) and a combination of effort-reward imbalance, perceived success, disappointment and social support (Hilpisch *et al.*, 2024a, b). However, this research designs a reward mechanism for a burnout reduction model, which contains a reward system (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards) as a solid foundation associated with job stress, work motivation, job satisfaction and employee burnout in family-owned restaurants. In comparison to previous reward systems of burnout reduction models, the model of this research further differentiates itself from those studied models through a model renovation which concentrates on dimensional reward systems, using the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards as the fundamental foundation for changing work attitudes (e.g. motivation, satisfaction and stress), leading to a significant development of employee burnout. So far, this newly designed reward mechanism for burnout reduction in family-owned restaurants has remained missing in the existing literature. This leads to a research question: "How can the reward mechanism (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards) change work attitudes (job stress, work motivation, job satisfaction), which lead to a significant change in workers' burnout in family-owned restaurants?" which previous studies have left unanswered. Subsequently, the current gap of literature has left the related policymakers and practitioners in the family-owned restaurants insufficient information to understand their workers' insights and fewer solutions to develop an effective reward mechanism to reduce workers' burnout, which allows them to maintain their workers' energy and capacity to work and serve more services to all tourists who come to dine at their restaurants. In response to this issue, this research proposes a

reward mechanism for burnout reduction, which aims to examine the relationships between rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), work motivation, stress, satisfaction and burnout.

Literature review

Burnout

Burnout is defined as emotional and physical exhaustion derived from a combination of anxiety and overworking conditions (Duan *et al.*, 2025). In workplaces, burnout can be seen as a syndrome that makes workers experience emotional and physical tiredness, particularly from their daily duty (Enzmann *et al.*, 1998). They appear to feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained and unable to fulfill the constant work requirements (Moghe *et al.*, 2025). When burnout continues, the workers' overall well-being is depleted over time, leading to a significant reduction in work capacity. Thereafter, it severely affects the long-term work productivity of the firms (Quesada-Puga *et al.*, 2024). These negative side effects of burnout can cause significant concern among individual workforces who can see their current jobs as a threat to their futures. They possibly have to consider alternative job solutions to change for their own good, as their current performances may not meet the overall requirements of their organizations. This may force them to make decisions to leave their jobs (Szczęśniak *et al.*, 2024), which significantly affects the organization's work retention, aiming to maintain professional workforces to support daily business operations. The continuance of this unsolved case can cause severe labor shortages, which lead to a serious reduction in the capacity to develop services and products for the markets. Consequently, it also affects firms' business sustainability and success in the future. Hence, all related firms have to find an effective solution to solve burnout in their workplaces since the prolonging of burnout can affect work productivity and the business sustainability of the firms.

Research gaps analysis and theoretical foundation

Over the years, there have been different groups of researchers who have integrated various factors to examine burnout among workers in the restaurant industry. For instance, Guimar *et al.* (2022) concentrated on the impacts of job demands, job resources, and job crafting on burnout. On the other hand, Min *et al.* (2023) concentrated on the impacts of metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral cultural intelligence on burnout. However, Wu *et al.* (2024) concentrated on the impacts of surface acting, deep acting and supervisor support on burnout. In contrast, Larena (2025) concentrated on emotional labor, surface acting and deep acting on burnout. Unlike the above researchers, Dorta-Afonso and Romero-Domínguez (2025) concentrated on the impacts of high-performance work systems, motivation, health impairment process, job demands and quality of life on burnout. In contradiction to past

Table 1. A summary of recent literature

Sources	Investigated factors
Teo <i>et al.</i> (2021)	HR practice, job autonomy, job demands and psychological capital
Im <i>et al.</i> (2021)	Surface acting and deep acting
Guimar <i>et al.</i> (2022)	Job demands, job resources and job crafting
Min <i>et al.</i> (2023)	Metacognitive, cognitive, motivational and behavioral cultural intelligence
Farrugia (2024)	Workload, stress, job responsibility, expectations, motivation and satisfaction
Wu <i>et al.</i> (2024)	Surface acting, deep acting and supervisor support
Larena (2025)	Emotional labor, surface acting and deep acting
Dorta-Afonso and Romero-Domínguez (2025)	High-performance work systems, motivation, health impairment process, job demands and quality of life
Akgul <i>et al.</i> (2025)	Job resources, job design, HR practice, job demands and workforce well-being

Source(s): By authors

studies, [Akgul et al. \(2025\)](#) concentrated on the impacts of Job resources, job design, HR practice, job demands and workforce well-being on burnout. These brief and recent studies are reported in [Table 1](#).

Although there have been various factors formulated to examine workers' burnout in the restaurant industry, some key factors, such as rewards ([Hilpisch et al., 2024a, b](#); [Sofiatanimoto and Richter, 2023](#)), work motivation ([Meng and Yang, 2024](#); [Puzzo et al., 2024](#)), job stress ([Szcześniak et al., 2024](#); [Yang et al., 2024](#)) and job satisfaction ([Duan et al., 2025](#); [Moghe et al., 2025](#)), which can have significant associations with burnout, have not been extensively incorporated to examine workers' burnout in family-owned restaurants yet. In particular, the role of the reward mechanism for burnout reduction in family-owned restaurants has been narrowly studied in the existing literature. So far, there are some studies have examined how the involvement of a reward mechanism influences the development of burnout in service hospitality. For instance, [Choi et al. \(2012\)](#) highlighted that monetary rewards had a significant role in changing the burnout propensity by reversing the reduction of personal accomplishment, improving depersonalization and lowering emotional exhaustion. On the contrary, [Koo et al. \(2020\)](#) underscored that reward systems had to consist of remotion rewards (e.g. compliments, opportunities, empowerment, and recognition) and material rewards (e.g. promotion, incentives, special leaves and certificate), which could be used to enhance positive attitudes and motivation for burnout reduction. On the other hand, [Alvarado et al. \(2021\)](#) developed an effort-reward model for burnout reduction in which the combination of effort and reward had significant impacts on individuals' workforce experiences; thus, it could reduce the emotional exhaustion among workers. However, [Zhang et al. \(2024b\)](#) developed an effort-reward imbalance model, which suggests that the imbalance between individual effort and reward offerings can reduce working morale, leading to a significant impact on employee burnout. Similarly, [Hilpisch et al. \(2024a, b\)](#) also developed an effort-reward imbalance model for employee burnout; however, the focus of this model was to examine how the imbalance between effort and rewards influenced perceived success, disappointment and social support, which led to a significant development of employee burnout.

In contrast to those studies, this research designs a reward mechanism for the burnout reduction model ([Figure 1](#)), which contains a reward system (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards) as a solid foundation associated with job stress, work motivation, job satisfaction and employee burnout in family-owned restaurants. In comparison to prior reward systems of burnout reduction models, the model of this research contains partially similar characteristics of rewarding systems; however, this study further renovates the reward mechanism for burnout reduction through dimensional reward systems as the fundamental ground for changing work attitudes, which further influences the development of employee burnout. This creates a uniqueness in providing constructive explanations which guide the Academic Learners as well as Human Resource Managers and Entrepreneurs in the family-owned restaurants to understand more about employees' insights responding to the development process of employee burnout, so that a constructive analysis can be conducted to find a more effective strategy to minimize employee burnout in the family-owned restaurants. To fill in this research

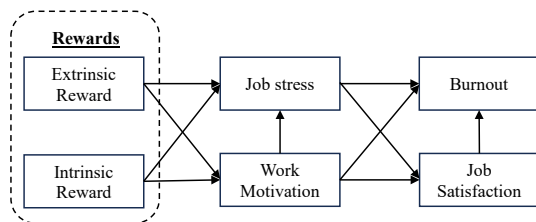


Figure 1. A reward mechanism for burnout reduction model (by Authors)

gap, this newly designed reward mechanism of the burnout reduction model is conducted to examine the associations between rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), work motivation, job stress, job satisfaction and burnout in the family-owned restaurants. With this reward mechanism for burnout reduction, the research can extend the causal complexity logic within the open innovation and dynamic capabilities (OI–DC) literature by examining how diverse interdependent factors combine to reduce work burnout in family-owned restaurants – a sector often overlooked in strategic innovation research. Subsequently, this research moves beyond linear cause-and-effect assumptions where researchers employ fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA) (Kraus *et al.*, 2018) to uncover how configurations of reward mechanisms (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), work motivation, job stress, and job satisfaction interact to prevent burnout among workers in the family-owned restaurants.

From a theoretical underpinning, a self-determination theory (SDT) (Edward Deci and Richard Ryan) (Deci and Ryan, 1985) is used to explain the reward mechanism of burnout reduction in family-owned restaurants. This theory concentrates on psychological perspectives, emphasizing that humans are driven by their desire to develop, grow, and gain fulfillment. This leads to a significant change in their motivation and satisfaction. This situation can significantly influence their well-being. In this sense, rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards) act as the foundation of workers' desired fulfillment, which influences their work motivation, stress and satisfaction, influencing well-being in the workplace, leading to a significant change in individuals' burnout. Subsequently, it complements the fsQCA, whose configurational approach enables this study to capture asymmetries and equifinality in how different firms achieve well-being outcomes, responding to recent theoretical calls for complexity-aware inquiry in the SME and hospitality domains. By focusing on work burnout – a nonmarket performance outcome – this study introduces a novel dependent variable into the OI–DC framework. It illustrates how noneconomic innovation capabilities (e.g. a reward mechanism (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), work motivation, job stress and job satisfaction) operate through multiple causal pathways in Southeast Asian microbusinesses such as family-owned restaurants. Hence, it reveals more insightful information that paves the way to formulate an effective reward mechanism to reduce burnout among workers in family-owned restaurants.

Rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards)

Rewards refer to anything that is given to recognize the workers' effort, service or achievement (Bains *et al.*, 2024). There are two main basic rewards, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, which are seen as incentives to stimulate individual workforces (Venkatesamy and Lew, 2024). Intrinsic rewards are the incentives that promote workers' sense of working purposes, making them inherently feel motivated and fulfilling their duties, while extrinsic rewards are external incentives such as prizes, bonuses or money that workers can directly receive from their firms.

For its relations with work motivation, rewards have a significant impact on work motivation (Mdhlalose, 2024). In particular, intrinsic rewards can develop a sense of work purpose that workers possess not only the feeling of contributing to their duties, but also the feeling of seeing their duties as meaningful (Bains *et al.*, 2024; Bandhu *et al.*, 2024). This creates an inner self-development center in which workers motivate themselves to work for the firm. For external rewards, workers see external incentives as a work stimulus, promoting their efforts to complete their tasks assigned by the firms (Venkatesamy and Lew, 2024; Zhang *et al.*, 2024a). Therefore, workers who can receive intrinsic and extrinsic rewards from their firms feel motivated to perform their duties.

For its relations with job stress, rewards significantly influence job stress (Fremling *et al.*, 2025). Specifically, internal rewards promote internal self-fulfillment, which workers expect to get from their work. This makes workers find their jobs less complicated but inherently interesting and enjoyable while performing their duties (Dorigatti *et al.*, 2024; Lee *et al.*, 2025). Meanwhile, external rewards offer direct impacts on workers, making them witness and

feel positive about their jobs (Gist-mackey *et al.*, 2024; Yoo and Marshall, 2022). Both types of rewards can promote positive stress to workers because rewards work as incentives, pushing workers to perceive their job as less threatening but more energetic behavior to accomplish (Fremling *et al.*, 2025; Gist-mackey *et al.*, 2024). Therefore, giving intrinsic and extrinsic rewards to workers can lower the propensity of workers' stress. Based on these relationship explanations, the hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

- H1a.* Intrinsic rewards positively influence work motivation in family-owned restaurants.
- H1b.* Extrinsic rewards positively influence work motivation in family-owned restaurants.
- H2a.* Intrinsic rewards negatively influence job stress in family-owned restaurants.
- H2b.* Extrinsic rewards negatively influence job stress in family-owned restaurants.

Work motivation

Work motivation refers to a person's desire to accomplish his or her tasks and goals (Mande and Supriadi, 2024). In the workplace, work motivation is the tool to stimulate task initiation, which enables workers to have themselves ready to start working on their assignments. Meanwhile, it also stimulates workers' persistence, making workers put their effort to work continuously for their organizations despite the challenges (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007; Jen *et al.*, 2024).

For its relation with job stress, work motivation can significantly change job stress (Saluy *et al.*, 2022). When workers feel motivated to do their jobs, they are likely to have high self-responsibility regardless of their daily duties. They know their direction and passion to work and accomplish their goals (Saleh *et al.*, 2022; Vroom, 1964). Furthermore, they see their jobs as their chances to learn and grow for personal career development rather than seeing their jobs as the main obstacles or threats (Bóthe *et al.*, 2022). Subsequently, possessing work motivation can create work confidence among workers; thus, they do not feel nervous to perform their duties.

For its relation with job satisfaction, work motivation has a significant impact on job satisfaction (Mande and Supriadi, 2024). Workers feel passionate about their jobs when they have work motivation. Meanwhile, they feel positive about their jobs and futures; therefore, this gives them a sense of accomplishment for their own good (Herzberg *et al.*, 1993). Subsequently, they inspire themselves and enjoy working to achieve their goals (Jen *et al.*, 2024). With their work passion and sense of accomplishment, they are happy to work for their firms. Therefore, workers receive more job satisfaction when their work motivation increases (Tegegne *et al.*, 2024).

For its relation with burnout, work motivation significantly influences workers' burnout (Dewey *et al.*, 2024). Particularly, workers often display great energy to work for their firms when they feel motivated (Puzzo *et al.*, 2024). They have a high interest in their work and take advantage to learn and develop themselves. Furthermore, they remain positive and productive with their work. With high work motivation, workers feel enthusiastic and work longer hours without having emotional and physical exhaustion (Meng and Yang, 2024). Therefore, it can be said that increasing work motivation can lead to burnout reduction among workers. Based on these relationship explanations, the hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

- H3.* Work motivation significantly influences workers' job stress.
- H4.* Work motivation significantly influences workers' job satisfaction.
- H5.* Work motivation significantly influences workers' burnout.

Job stress

Job stress refers to workers' mental tension derived from the difficult situation of their work, making them worry about their future (Peter *et al.*, 2024). Job stress usually happens when workers are unable to fulfill job demands, causing them to experience a lot of work pressure. Consequently, they often look concerned and possess high anxiety.

For its relation with job satisfaction, stress can significantly change workers' satisfaction (Alrawahi *et al.*, 2024). Growing job stress can cause significant job pressure to individual workers. This can happen because when people feel stressed, they find themselves unable to perform or meet their organization's demands and expectations (Peter *et al.*, 2024). Being unable to meet these standards can result in high concern about their future work performances, which leads to less enjoyment of their duties. Therefore, when workers continue feeling stressed with their work, they are no longer happy with their current duties (Lin and Lin, 2024).

For its relation with burnout, job stress has a significant impact on burnout among workers (Bärtl *et al.*, 2024). Although stress can push workers to perform their duties and strive for work excellence, increasing job stress has significant reverse side effects on workers. The prolonged stress can make the workers have no interest in their jobs, affecting their work capacity in the long run. When workers experience high job stress, it leads to high anxiety, making them feel overwhelmed and detrimental to themselves (Yang *et al.*, 2024). Subsequently, this can affect their emotional and physical health, and workers can easily experience tiredness, indicating the state of burnout syndrome among workers (Szczęśniak *et al.*, 2024). Based on these relationship explanations, the hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

- H6. Job stress significantly influences workers' job satisfaction.
- H7. Job stress significantly influences workers' burnout.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction refers to a pleasurable job condition in which the current job meets a worker's needs or desires (Quesada-puga *et al.*, 2024). Job satisfaction can be seen as a positive work attitude in which workers often show a sense of gratification and pleasure, making them enjoy working for their organizations (Hazan-liran and Karni-vizer, 2024). This can result in better aspects in the workers' lives related not only to their work but also to their personal achievements, relationships, and everyday activities.

For its relation with burnout, job satisfaction has a significant effect on job burnout (Duan *et al.*, 2025). Workers appear to feel more encouraged and engaged with their roles when they are happy with their jobs. Moreover, when job satisfaction keeps growing, workers often respond with highly energetic and positive attitudes toward their co-workers and job responsibilities (Moghe *et al.*, 2025). With these impacts of job satisfaction, workers are likely to experience high frustration and tiredness with their jobs. Subsequently, it can be implied that job satisfaction significantly improves not only mental health but also physical health for workers who, in turn, avoid experiencing work burnout in the workplace (Quesada-puga *et al.*, 2024). Based on these relationship explanations, the hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

- H8. Job satisfaction significantly influences workers' burnout.

A Reward Mechanism for Burnout Reduction Model

All hypotheses discussed in previous sections are incorporated into Figure 1, formulating a new research model as a "Reward Mechanism for Burnout Reduction Model". The model starts with rewards with two main dimensions (extrinsic and intrinsic rewards), which have direct impacts on work motivation and job stress. Next, work motivation directly influences

job stress, job satisfaction and burnout. In addition, job stress shows direct impacts on job satisfaction and burnout. Last but not least, job satisfaction demonstrates a direct effect on burnout.

Methodology

Sample criteria and data collection

Researchers invited 500 participants to join this research via questionnaires. In the sample criteria, researchers only invited the participants who were currently working at family-owned restaurants located in tourist areas around Thailand. Furthermore, researchers selected only participants who were 18 years old and had at least one year of experience.

For the data collection process, there were two main techniques (convenience and snowball sampling techniques) that researchers used to access the data from the participants. First, the convenience sampling technique was used to randomly approach the participants at the restaurants and other convenient places, such as near public streets, universities, malls, supermarkets, etc., with a screening question: "Have you been working at any family-owned restaurant around tourist areas for a year yet?". Once they said "Yes," they were asked to provide their consent by saying "Agree" or "Disagree." Then, researchers handed the set of questionnaires to the participants to fill in for around 10 min when they agreed to participate in the survey process. After that, researchers applied the snowball sampling technique as an optional task to let the participants provide some information related to other participants for further contact. Despite the snowball sampling technique being optional, some participants also provided information, which also helped researchers to access more details within the tourist areas. At the end of December 2024, researchers conducted data cleansing and found only 335 questionnaires valid for processing in data analysis.

Survey measurement and validity development

In the survey measurement, there were five main variables that consisted of questionnaire items adopted from previous research. For instance, rewards contained two dimensions (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), having three items for each dimension and these items were adopted from [Elmadag and Ellinger \(2018\)](#). Next, work motivation had four items, which were adopted from [Kong and Wang \(2021\)](#). Then, job stress had four items, which were adopted from [Kim and Maijan \(2024\)](#). After that, job satisfaction had four items, which were adopted from [Cheng and O-Yang \(2018\)](#). Finally, burnout contained eight items that were derived from two main dimensions "exhaustion = 4 items" and "cynicism = 4 items." These dimensions were combined to formulate one final dependent variable, "burnout." Meanwhile, these items were adopted from [Min et al. \(2023\)](#).

For the item evaluation technique, researchers first had to revise and modify the contents of these items to be more suitable for workers in family-owned restaurants located in tourist destinations, since these items were adopted from different studies. Then, researchers applied a 5-point Likert scale to let the workers answer the questionnaire items.

For survey validity development, researchers evaluated content reliability and improved content clarity. First, researchers applied pilot testing by sending the full survey form to test with 30 family-owned restaurant workers. Then, researchers checked the content reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (scores ≥ 0.7) ([Nupueng et al., 2024](#)) after receiving all survey forms from the pilot testing participants. Based on the reliability statistics in [Table 2](#), the survey form obtained enough content reliability since all variables received reliability statistics above 0.7. After that, researchers further revised some items to improve the content clarity of the survey following the comments of the pilot testing participants. Finally, finalized items were reported in [Table 2](#).

Table 2. Survey tool and pilot testing results

Variable	Items	Alpha (α)
Reward	<i>Intrinsic Rewards</i>	0.85
	(1) I feel that my restaurant owner treats workers nicely	
	(2) I feel that my supervisors respect my working time and effort	
	(3) I feel I am warmly welcome to work in this restaurant	0.77
	<i>Extrinsic Rewards</i>	
	(1) I can receive overtime payment if I continue working	
Work Motivation	(2) I can receive some gifts from the restaurant as a reward for an outstanding worker	0.81
	(3) I can receive top-up money when I can bring more tourists to eat at our restaurant	
	(1) I believe that I can learn a lot about running a family-owned restaurant	
	(2) I think I can develop multi-skills when working in this restaurant	
Job Stress	(3) I think working in this restaurant can help me improve my foreign language skills for communication with foreign tourists	0.90
	(4) I believe that this restaurant gives me experiences and chances to be a professional worker in the future	
	(1) I feel uncomfortable about the current work environment	
	(2) I feel that the working processes are unorganized	
Job Satisfaction	(3) I often face toxic communication with my co-workers	0.88
	(4) Overall, working in a family-owned restaurant makes me stressed	
	(1) I think working in this restaurant is the right decision	
	(2) I am quite happy to serve tourist customers in this restaurant	
Burnout	(3) I like the working environment of this restaurant	0.94
	(4) I think working in this restaurant is an enjoyable working experience	
	(1) I feel emotionally drained from my work	
	(2) After work, I have no energy left in my body	
	(3) I feel tired when I get up in the morning and have to go to work	
	(4) I think my health condition is weaker than before	
	(5) I have become less interested in my work since I started this job	
	(6) I have become less enthusiastic about my work	
(7) I am doubtful whether this work contributes anything to my career development		
	(8) Now I have no interest in working with my co-workers	

Source(s): By authors

Common method of bias (CMB)

This research contained data collected using a self-administered questionnaire in which the participants could answer the questionnaire items by themselves. Therefore, the answers were based on participants' personal opinions, as the self-reporting answers, which could somehow lead to a potential bias. To address this concern, a CMB statistics was conducted to assess the potential bias level existing in the data of this research. Thus, Harman's single-factor testing that checks a randomized factor with variance statistics (scores < 50%) shows no concern of potential bias in the collected data (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). To obtain this statistical report, the SPSS Software was applied to extract the statistical components by applying a fixed number of factors, "Factor Extracting to 1" and a rotation "None" following the principle of component analysis. Based on the statistics provided in Table 3, the randomized factor had a variance scores 39.003% which was less than the thresholds (50%); hence, the data of this research did not have potentially biased answers.

Table 3. Common method bias statistics

Component	Total variance explained			Extraction sums of squared loadings		
	Initial eigenvalues Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	13.229	39.003	39.003	13.229	39.003	39.003
2	5.017	9.275	42.308			
3	3.905	5.922	43.118			
4	3.640	3.035	44.470			
5	2.716	2.551	46.390			
6	1.859	1.836	49.008			
7	0.995	1.441	51.300			
8	0.568	1.025	53.190			
9	0.332	0.763	55.605			
Etc	Etc	Etc	Etc	Etc	Etc	Etc

Note(s): Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Source(s): By authors

Table 4. Model measurement

Variable	Alpha (α)	CR	AVE	Discriminant validity test					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
Intrinsic Rewards	0.882	0.790	0.701	0.882	0.289	0.563	-0.411	0.509	-0.365
Extrinsic Rewards	0.753	0.778	0.805		0.904	0.447	-0.602	0.377	-0.415
Work Motivation	0.904	0.806	0.722			0.896	-0.633	0.660	-0.432
Job Stress	0.918	0.811	0.699				0.799	-0.529	0.386
Job Satisfaction	0.869	0.793	0.750					0.933	-0.391
Burnout	0.804	0.855	0.906						0.856

Source(s): By authors

Results

Model measurement

This research applied a path analysis method to analyze the collected data. In this method, some statistical performances were reported before analyzing the results of path analysis.

First, the reliability construct of the research model. Each variable had to obtain sufficient scores in Cronbach’s Alpha and composite reliability (CR) (scores \geq 0.7) following the reliability statistics of Nupueng *et al.* (2024). In Table 4, the Alpha and CR scores of each variable were higher than the minimum reliability thresholds (0.7); thus, this research obtained enough model reliability.

Next, the validity of the research model was also evaluated to ensure high clarity in providing valid statistics. To evaluate model validity, convergent and discriminant validities were assessed following the model validity statistics of Kim and Maijan (2024). For convergent validity, each variable has to obtain average variance extracted (AVE) scores of more than 0.5. Meanwhile, discriminant validity can exist when the square root scores of AVEs are higher than the correlation scores. Based on Table 4, all variables obtained AVE scores higher than 0.5, while the square root scores of AVEs were also higher than the correlation scores, indicating acceptable convergent and discriminant validity. Therefore, this research obtained acceptable model validity for the path analysis method.

Last but not least, model fitness was also reported by evaluating the fitness indicators such as: CMIN2/df = chi-square/degrees of freedom, GFI = goodness of fit index, CFI = comparative fit index, NFI = normed fit index, AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit

Table 5. Model fitness

Indexes	Scores	Thresholds	Results
CMIN ² /df	2.308	≤3	Good
GFI	0.993	≥0.9	Good
NFI	0.937	≥0.9	Good
CFI	0.996	≥0.9	Good
AGFI	0.965	≥0.8	Good
RMSEA	0.064	<0.08	Good
PCLOSE	0.103	≥0.05	Good

Source(s): By authors

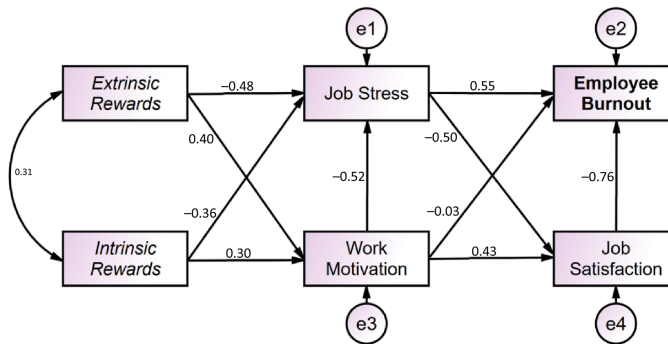


Figure 2. Statistical findings of path analysis method (by Authors)

Table 6. Critical statistics and hypotheses summary

<i>Chanel A: Direct path testing</i>					
Predictors	Dependent Variables	St.D Beta	p-value	Sig. Lv	Hypotheses Results
Intrinsic Rewards	Work Motivation	0.30	0.000**	Sig	Accepted
Extrinsic Rewards	Work Motivation	0.40	0.000**	Sig	Accepted
Intrinsic Rewards	Job Stress	-0.36	0.000**	Sig	Accepted
Extrinsic Rewards	Job Stress	-0.48	0.000**	Sig	Accepted
Work Motivation	Job Satisfaction	-0.52	0.000**	Sig	Accepted
Work Motivation	Job Satisfaction	0.43	0.000**	Sig	Accepted
Job Stress	Job Satisfaction	-0.50	0.000**	Sig	Accepted
Work Motivation	Burnout	-0.03	0.701	Insig	Rejected
Job Stress	Burnout	0.55	0.000**	Sig	Accepted
Job Satisfaction	Burnout	-0.76	0.000**	Sig	Accepted

Chanel B: Mediating path testing

Relationships	Direct	Indirect	p-value	Sig. Lv	Mediating results
Work Motivation→Job Satisfaction→Burnout	-0.03	-0.32	0.000**	Sig	Confirmed

Note(s): *represents $p < 0.05$, whilst **represents $p < 0.01$

Source(s): By authors

index, RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation, P-CLOSE = probability of close. These fitness indicators have to obtain scores equal to or above the fitness statistics, which are highlighted in [Table 5](#), following the statistical recommendation of [Kim and Maijan \(2024\)](#). In [Table 5](#), all fitness indicators obtained scores above the fitness requirements, showing a good model fit to perform the path analysis method.

Path analysis findings

All critical statistical findings of this research were reported in [Figure 2](#) and [Table 6](#). Based on the findings, work motivation was significantly influenced by intrinsic rewards ($\beta = 0.30, p < 0.001$) and extrinsic rewards ($\beta = 0.40, p < 0.001$). Second, job stress was significantly influenced by intrinsic rewards ($\beta = -0.36, p < 0.001$), extrinsic rewards ($\beta = -0.48, p < 0.001$) and work motivation ($\beta = -0.52, p < 0.001$). Third, Job satisfaction was significantly influenced by work motivation ($\beta = 0.43, p < 0.001$) and job stress ($\beta = -0.50, p < 0.001$). Finally, burnout was significantly influenced by job stress ($\beta = 0.55, p < 0.001$) and job satisfaction ($\beta = -0.76, p < 0.001$), except work motivation ($\beta = -0.03, p > 0.05$).

According to mediating testing of Work Motivation→Job Satisfaction→Burnout, although the direct impact of work motivation on burnout was insignificant, its indirect impact ($\beta = -0.32, p < 0.001$) on burnout was significant. This result outlined job satisfaction as a significant mediator between work motivation and burnout.

Discussions

For relations with work motivation, intrinsic rewards positively influenced work motivation, accepting [hypothesis 1a](#). This result was similar to previous research ([Bains et al., 2024](#); [Bandhu et al., 2024](#)). However, this research found that intrinsic rewards provided by the family-owned restaurants allowed workers to understand and acknowledge the work collaboration not only between workers and workers but also between workers, supervisors and restaurant owners. Workers felt emotionally attached to the workplace, where they felt comfortable working alongside others. Furthermore, the intrinsic rewards also made them understand that it was worth working for the restaurants where they could learn and develop themselves in the current hospitality industry, despite having unclear professional standards compared to other restaurants. Furthermore, another significant notice of this research result was that providing a warm welcome could also provide self-acknowledgement in the workplace, which promoted their positive perspectives and willingness to perform their duties for the restaurants. Then, extrinsic rewards positively influenced work motivation, accepting [hypothesis 1b](#). This research found a similar result to past research ([Venketsamy and Lew, 2024](#); [Zhang et al., 2024b](#)). Though, this research found that extrinsic rewards provided by the family-owned restaurants made the workers feel more energetic toward their duties since they could obtain more overtime payments as the extra money from their restaurants. Moreover, providing workers with some rewards such as gifts, bonuses and a salary increment could also boost their work morale significantly. This somehow triggered their desire to work and provide services to serve the tourists who came to dine at the restaurants. Thereafter, it led to hard work and dedication to offer more required services to their customers. Hence, workers felt motivated to work for their restaurants.

For relations with job stress, intrinsic rewards negatively influenced job stress, accepting [hypothesis 2a](#). This result was consistent with past studies ([Dorigatti et al., 2024](#); [Lee et al., 2025](#)). Unlike these studies, this research revealed that intrinsic rewards provided by family-owned restaurants made workers possess internal self-enjoyment and personal fulfillment with their daily duties at the restaurants. This indicated that they did not feel too serious or concerned about any challenges arising from their job demands and pressures from their supervisors and the owners of the restaurants. On the other hand, intrinsic rewards pushed workers to see challenges as opportunities to learn and improve their personal career

development. This was known as the “internal incentives” that created positive changes within themselves, feeling deeply engrossed in their jobs as hobbies, excitement to learn new things, and pride to overcome their challenging duties. Next, extrinsic rewards negatively influenced job stress, accepting [hypothesis 2b](#). This result was similar to past studies ([Gist-mackey et al., 2024](#); [Yoo and Marshall, 2022](#)). In contrast, this research underscored that offering extrinsic rewards encouraged workers to overcome work pressure. In other words, it created more positive stress rather than negative stress for workers. Workers saw external rewards as incentives that deserved their hard work and perseverance in the workplace. They had to devote their strength, work dedication, and hard work to overcome all the work pressures, challenges, and requirements from their supervisors and the restaurant owners so that they could obtain these external incentives to support their livelihoods. Thus, providing external rewards could offset the workers’ job stress in the family-owned restaurants. Last but not least, work motivation negatively influenced job stress, accepting [hypothesis 3](#). The result of this research was consistent with previous studies ([Bóthe et al., 2022](#); [Saleh et al., 2022](#)). However, it was found that work motivation in family-owned restaurants allowed the workers to have more positive perspectives and self-rewarding behaviors. This could lead to better practice of mindfulness, which they found a balance between their working goals for personal challenges and development without causing excessive stress. For instance, workers saw themselves working in the family-owned restaurants as having a good time to learn multi-skills and learn a lot about running the family business in the restaurant service industry. Workers had already set their commitment and readiness to perform their work in the restaurant. This allowed them to stay organized to perform their regular tasks in the family-owned restaurants from the start until the end of the day.

For relations with job satisfaction, work motivation positively influenced job satisfaction, accepting [hypothesis 4](#). This research’s result was consistent with past studies ([Jen et al., 2024](#); [Tegegne et al., 2024](#)). However, this research revealed that when workers possess work motivation, they see a lot of positive work environments in the family-owned restaurants. This led to significant positive work relationships with their colleagues and created a supportive work environment for themselves. These positive side effects of work motivation also made the workers want to work to achieve their tasks, assigned by their supervisors and the restaurants, so that they could obtain recognition from their restaurants. Subsequently, it promoted more satisfactory working experiences and chances to grow for the workers. These positive aspects derived from work motivation positively influenced their personal and professional well-being while working at the restaurants. Then, job stress negatively influenced job satisfaction, accepting [hypothesis 6](#). The result was similar to past studies ([Lin and Lin, 2024](#); [Peter et al., 2024](#)). On the other hand, this research revealed that job stress could cause significant concerns among workers. Specifically, workers outlined their uncomfortable feelings about their current work environment. Furthermore, when they continued having high job stress, they started perceiving their working processes as unorganized and hard to complete. This could result in high anxiety, which affected their enjoyment in working for the restaurants for years ahead; hence, the prolonging of job stress diminished individual work satisfaction. In contrast, if job stress could be maintained at a minimal level, it could create positive stress to boost positive work attitudes, which would create more job satisfaction for the workers.

For relations with burnout, job stress positively influenced burnout, accepting [hypothesis 7](#). This result was similar to past research ([Szczęśniak et al., 2024](#); [Yang et al., 2024](#)). However, this research identified that job stress in family-owned restaurants made workers feel insecure about their daily duties. They appeared to have a high fear of being incapable of performing their tasks. Sometimes, their stress could also trigger them to feel toxic about their work environment easily when they could no longer handle their job stress. Consequently, these side effects of stress created emotional and physical exhaustion among workers, leading to severe burnout syndrome. After that, job satisfaction negatively influenced burnout, accepting [hypothesis 8](#). This research’s result was consistent with past studies ([Duan et al., 2025](#);

Quesada-puga *et al.*, 2024). However, the result of this research underscored that job satisfaction in the family-owned restaurants created a delicate balance between obtaining joy in what workers do and feeling the weight of their tiredness. When workers were satisfied with their daily tasks, they felt positive about the work environment, making them have positive relationships with their co-workers and supervisors, working together to serve their customers. Their satisfaction boosted their work effort and dedication in providing services to customers and having enjoyable working experiences in the restaurants. Therefore, it stimulated their work morale and allowed them to continue working without severe exhaustion despite the long work hours during high tourist seasons. In contradiction to the above factors, work motivation did not show any significant impact on burnout, rejecting *hypothesis 5*. This research rejected the results of past studies (Puzzo *et al.*, 2024; Meng and Yang, 2024). This research found that work motivation indirectly influenced burnout, with the mediating support of job satisfaction on the connection between work motivation and burnout. The result of this research marked the different characteristics of workers in family-owned restaurants compared to other restaurants. Unlike previous studies, when work motivation changed, workers continued evaluating their job satisfaction more before justifying their burnout syndrome. For workers in family-owned restaurants, there could be three conditions that caused this incident to happen. First, it regulated emotional strains. It was possible that motivation could drive employees to work hard, but without satisfaction, they may have felt unfulfilled, leading to stress and eventual burnout. Second, it had a connection with work engagement. It indicated that employees who felt motivated but lacked satisfaction still experienced frustration, which triggered burnout. In response, satisfaction ensured that motivation could be channeled into productive and fulfilling work rather than stress. Third, it acted as a psychological buffer, indicating how satisfaction minimizes the work pressures among individual employees. Despite working in demanding environments, satisfied employees appeared to experience less burnout because they found meaning in their work.

Research implications

Theoretical implications

For theoretical implications, this research contributes significantly to the existing literature by conceptualizing, operationalizing, and examining how the reward mechanism reduces workers' burnout in family-owned restaurants in tourist areas. First, we can understand that the reward mechanism, consisting of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, can significantly change workers' motivation and stress in family-owned restaurants. Particularly, the roles of intrinsic rewards work as intangible rewards promoting good working morale, making workers see their jobs as opportunities to learn and grow their working experience for their own futures, and all of these aspects are from within the individual workers. Subsequently, intrinsic rewards make workers see their daily duties as less stressful and stay motivated. Furthermore, the roles of extrinsic rewards offer work as tangible rewards, allowing workers to witness and measure the propensity of their work dedication and hard work to meet the requirements of extrinsic rewards. They appear to show less hesitation in putting their effort and willingness into their duties in exchange for recognition, promotion, bonuses and overtime payments from the restaurants. These create positive stress and work motivation among workers.

Second, this research also promotes our awareness of the roles of work motivation affecting stress, satisfaction and burnout in family-owned restaurants. Specifically, work motivation allows workers to find their work passion and set their goals of achievement. Subsequently, they can possess a daily work routine that guides them to accomplish their duties. This can lead to a reduction of individual anxiety, which leads to low job stress. Meanwhile, work motivation stands as the indirect influencer of burnout in family-owned restaurants. Its effects also promote positive perspectives about their own career development and future in the current industry. This allows them to perceive more friendliness, warmth, care and collaboration provided by family-owned restaurants where they can work happily for their livelihoods; thus,

when these positive aspects are improved, workers are likely to experience high burnout syndrome.

Third, this research lets us know more about the role of job stress affecting not only workers' satisfaction but also workers' burnout in family-owned restaurants. When workers are stressed about their jobs, they see more challenges in their jobs. Furthermore, they find their jobs less interesting and less enjoyable. However, when their stress level remains stable or at a low level, they appear to feel more positive toward their working environment and feel energetic to perform their work. Their job satisfaction grows, whereas their emotional and physical well-being are also in a healthy condition.

Fourth, this research also improves our knowledge about the role of job satisfaction in influencing workers' burnout in family-owned restaurants. When workers are happy with their jobs, they become enthusiastic and supportive of their co-workers in the restaurants. They also find their duties in the restaurants enjoyable. This creates a balance to their work life, which creates a healthy working condition, making them more resistant to physical and emotional drains. Therefore, this can help workers to revive their energy to continue working without facing serious burnout syndrome.

Finally, this research contributes by consolidating the SDT with open innovation and dynamic capabilities (IO-DC), fsQCA to understand the reward mechanism as a tool to minimize workers' burnout in family-owned restaurants. Particularly, both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards provide a solid foundation for responding to workers' desired fulfillment, which triggers positive stress and work motivation in workers. Thus, this leads to better job satisfaction, which offers workers a significant creation of personal growth and fulfillment, allowing them to push their self-determination and commitment to accomplish their job roles and responsibilities in the family-owned restaurants. As a result, it positively influences their overall well-being, leading to a significant reduction in workers' burnout. In the current emerging markets, this reward mechanism for burnout reduction also contributes to a Strategic Extension regarding IO-DC and fsQCA in family-owned restaurants under the SMEs. Firstly, the reward mechanism can help the SMEs to formulate Open Innovations as a "Psychological Enabler," aligning with the SDT, which leverages more ideas from individual workers to enhance internal innovation regarding Autonomy, Competence, and Relatedness. For Autonomy, workers can have a sense of being empowered to collaborate and share their willingness to work for their restaurants. For competence, workers are motivated to work and learn more practical skills to perform their duties better. For relatedness, workers are happy to work closely with their co-workers to achieve new results for their restaurants. Secondly, the mechanism also formulates dynamic capabilities, which help many SMEs build on the SDT infrastructure, allowing the restaurants to obtain better Sensing, Seizing, and Transforming Capabilities. For Sensing Capability, it enhances restaurants' ability to identify burnout risks and motivational gaps through feedback loops for restaurants to analyze and improve. For Seizing Capability, it promotes restaurants' ability to implement reward strategies that align with employee values and goals. For Transforming Capability, restaurants can redesign roles, workflows, and recognition systems to support their workers' autonomy, competence and relatedness.

Managerial implications

For managerial implications, this research concentrates on applying the reward mechanism as the solid foundation to reduce burnout in family-owned restaurants; thus, all suggested implementations are provided to practice the reward mechanism mainly. Therefore, all family-owned restaurants can implement their reward mechanisms for burnout reduction as follows.

First, the restaurants have to provide intrinsic rewards to their workers through recognition and praise, personal development, feedback and coaching, and a positive work environment, especially for SMEs in Southeast Asian countries (Matthew, 2024). In recognition and praise offerings, the restaurants have to acknowledge their workers' hard work and achievements

using verbal praise or announcing the Worker of the Month Program to praise their hard work and dedication. For personal development offerings, restaurants give some training related to serving techniques in hospitality services, particularly to those who are newly recruited, so that they can possess enough skills to perform their duties and advance their career development step by step. For feedback and coaching offerings, all related supervisors can provide some regular constructive feedback and mentoring to improve their performance and avoid unnecessary mistakes with customers and co-workers, so that workers can feel supported in their growth. For positive work environment offerings, although family-owned restaurants are not highly standardized compared to other types of restaurants, the restaurants still have to create a collaborative and supportive workplace culture to make workers feel valued and respected, because they are also human beings and use their feelings to work for the success of the restaurants.

Second, restaurants have to offer extrinsic rewards to their workers through competitive wages, a certain degree of performance bonuses, tips and gratuities, and health and wellness benefits, which can be applicable for SMEs in Southeast Asia. For competitive wages, restaurants can provide competitive monthly salaries to attract their work commitment and retain them to continue working for the restaurants. For a certain degree of performance bonuses, restaurants can offer some bonuses when they can help the restaurant's operation service offering smoothly to their customers, especially during high tourist seasons. For tips and gratuity offerings, restaurants can allow all workers to obtain daily tips received from their customers, which can help top up their incomes since workers working in family-owned restaurants may not receive high wages compared to other types of restaurants. For health and wellness benefit offerings, restaurants have to reserve some budget to support their workers' well-being, such as health and other accident insurance, which can at least support them in covering some unexpected incidents.

Policy and societal implications

The findings of this research have significant implications for labor policy development, particularly in emerging economies where family-owned restaurants constitute a substantial portion of the hospitality sector. Government agencies should consider developing specialized labor guidelines for SMEs in the hospitality sector that recognize the unique challenges these businesses face in implementing comprehensive reward systems while maintaining operational viability. Minimum wage policies should be reassessed to account for the total compensation package in family-owned restaurants, including intrinsic rewards such as skills development and career mentorship opportunities. Our findings suggest that when intrinsic rewards effectively reduce job stress, they create genuine value for workers that extends beyond monetary compensation. Policy makers could develop tax incentives for SME restaurants that invest in employee training, mentorship programs and structured career development pathways, as these represent measurable intrinsic rewards. Work hour regulations and overtime policies require particular attention in the context of family-owned restaurants operating in tourist areas, where seasonal fluctuations create intense workload variations. The research demonstrates that extrinsic rewards, including overtime payments, significantly reduce job stress ($\beta = -0.48, p < 0.001$) when properly implemented. Policy frameworks should therefore establish flexible overtime regulations that allow family-owned restaurants to provide meaningful compensation during peak seasons while ensuring worker protection during low-demand periods.

Tourism development policies should explicitly recognize the critical role of workforce well-being in sustaining destination competitiveness. Our findings reveal that burnout significantly threatens the service quality foundation upon which tourist destinations depend. Tourism boards and destination management organizations should integrate workforce well-being indicators into their destination performance metrics and policy planning processes. Economic development incentives should prioritize sustainable employment practices in

tourism-dependent regions. Given that job satisfaction acts as a mediator between work motivation and burnout ($\beta = -0.32, p < 0.001$), policies promoting long-term employment stability in family-owned restaurants can contribute to both economic sustainability and community well-being. This could include preferential loan programs for restaurants demonstrating a commitment to employee retention and development. Skills development and certification programs should be established at the regional level to enhance the intrinsic reward value of working in family-owned restaurants. Such programs would address the “unclear professional standards” challenge identified in this research while providing workers with transferable skills that increase their career mobility and job satisfaction.

Occupational health policies must address burnout as a legitimate health concern requiring preventive intervention rather than reactive treatment. The research demonstrates clear pathways through which workplace conditions affect worker burnout, suggesting that preventive health policies should target workplace design and reward systems. This could include mandatory mental health coverage for hospitality workers and occupational health programs specifically designed for SME restaurants. Social protection systems should be adapted to address the employment patterns typical in family-owned restaurants, where workers often experience seasonal employment variations and may lack access to traditional employee benefits. Portable benefits systems that allow workers to maintain health insurance and retirement contributions across multiple family-owned restaurant employers could address these gaps.

Family-owned restaurants serve as critical community anchors that preserve local culture while providing employment opportunities. The research findings suggest that effective reward mechanisms can enhance the sustainability of these cultural and economic institutions. Communities should recognize and support family-owned restaurants as essential social infrastructure rather than merely commercial enterprises. Community-based mentorship and skills-sharing programs could amplify the intrinsic reward effects identified in this research. When community members volunteer to provide business mentoring, customer service training or financial literacy programs to restaurant workers, they create additional sources of intrinsic reward that extend beyond what individual restaurants can provide. Local tourism strategies should emphasize authentic dining experiences provided by family-owned restaurants, creating market conditions that support the economic viability necessary for implementing comprehensive reward systems. This creates a virtuous cycle where community cultural preservation supports economic sustainability, which in turn enables better working conditions.

Family-owned restaurants often provide first employment opportunities for young people and flexible employment options for individuals balancing family responsibilities. The research findings on intrinsic rewards promoting work motivation ($\beta = 0.30, p < 0.001$) suggest that these establishments can serve as valuable career development platforms when proper reward mechanisms are implemented. Gender equity considerations are particularly relevant, as family-owned restaurants often employ significant numbers of women who may value flexible scheduling and supportive work environments (intrinsic rewards) alongside competitive compensation (extrinsic rewards). Policies supporting family-owned restaurants in implementing comprehensive reward systems can contribute to broader gender equity goals in workforce participation. Skills transfer between generations within family-owned restaurants represents a form of intergenerational social capital that benefits both workers and communities. Supporting these establishments through policy interventions helps preserve traditional knowledge while adapting it to contemporary service standards.

Digital transformation support for family-owned restaurants should consider how technology can enhance rather than replace the human-centered service that defines these establishments. The research suggests that work motivation and job satisfaction are critical factors in burnout prevention, implying that technology implementations should enhance worker capabilities rather than deskilling positions. Future workforce development programs should recognize the hybrid skill sets developed in family-owned restaurants, where workers

often perform multiple functions and develop strong customer relationship capabilities. These skills are increasingly valuable in an economy emphasizing personalized service and authentic experiences.

The research findings support an integrated ecosystem approach to supporting family-owned restaurants and their workers. Rather than addressing labor issues, tourism development and economic policy in isolation, coordinated policy frameworks should recognize the interconnected nature of these domains. Public-private partnerships could leverage the research findings by creating shared responsibility for worker well-being between restaurant owners, government agencies, tourism organizations and community groups. For example, destination marketing organizations could partially fund employee training programs that enhance service quality while providing intrinsic rewards to workers. Policy effectiveness should be measured using integrated metrics that assess both business sustainability and worker well-being outcomes. The research provides validated measures for job stress, work motivation, job satisfaction and burnout that could be incorporated into policy monitoring systems. Longitudinal tracking of policy interventions based on the research model could provide evidence for refining and scaling successful approaches. This would create a feedback loop between research, policy implementation and continuous improvement.

While this research was conducted in Thailand's tourist areas, the fundamental principles have global applicability for family-owned restaurants in tourism-dependent regions worldwide. International development organizations could use these findings to inform technical assistance programs supporting sustainable tourism development in emerging economies. Cross-cultural adaptations of the reward mechanism framework should consider local values and employment patterns while maintaining the core insight that balanced intrinsic and extrinsic rewards can effectively prevent burnout. This suggests opportunities for comparative research and policy learning across different cultural and economic contexts. The implications of this research extend far beyond individual restaurant management practices to encompass fundamental questions about how societies can support sustainable, inclusive economic development that prioritizes both business viability and human well-being. By addressing burnout prevention at the policy level, communities can build more resilient local economies while preserving the cultural authenticity that makes destinations attractive to visitors and meaningful places to live and work for residents.

Conclusion

This research developed a reward mechanism for burnout reduction in family-owned restaurants, which aimed to test the relationships between rewards (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), stress, work motivation, satisfaction and burnout. Results indicated that workers felt motivated when they received both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards from the restaurants. Meanwhile, their job stress was significantly influenced by work motivation and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. Then, their job satisfaction was significantly influenced by job stress and work motivation. After that, their burnout was significantly influenced by job stress and job satisfaction, except for work motivation. Finally, the insignificant relationship between motivation and burnout led to further exploration on mediating testing, which found job satisfaction mediating the connection between work motivation and burnout. This mediating result indicated that workers saw work motivation as the solid foundation of burnout; however, the side effects of motivation took more time to convince workers to detect outcomes of their emotional and physical energy. Only when their work satisfaction changed could they realize the propensity of their job burnout because their work satisfaction indicated the level of well-being, which could influence their emotional and physical condition.

To sum up, a reward mechanism giving workers intrinsic and extrinsic rewards can significantly boost workers' work morale, developing more positive stress, motivation and

satisfaction among workers who, in turn, possess more emotional and physical energy to work and serve their customers. In this sense, having a solid reward mechanism can help reduce workers' burnout in family-owned restaurants. To ensure more effectiveness in minimizing employee burnout, a well-structured reward mechanism should include several elements of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards. For intrinsic rewards, the rewards can be provided in the following forms such as: recognition and praise, personal development, feedback and coaching, and a positive work environment. For extrinsic rewards, the rewards can be provided in the following forms such as competitive wages, a certain degree of performance bonuses, tips and gratuities, and health and wellness benefits. As a result, these findings offer strong theoretical implications for the Open Innovation and Dynamic Capability literature by demonstrating that burnout reduction is not the result of isolated organizational levers but rather emerges from distinct yet equally effective bundles of innovation behavior, capability deployment and relational incentives. These configurational insights reaffirm and extend causal complexity logic, showing that dynamic capabilities related to the reward mechanism (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), work motivation, job stress and job satisfaction can merge in multiple ways to safeguard psychological well-being in resource-constrained, family-based enterprises.

Limitations and future studies

Despite the completion of this research, some limitations exist. First, this research focused on examining the reward mechanism for workers' burnout reduction in family-owned restaurants located in the tourist areas of Thailand. The nature of applying this reward mechanism can have some limitations for restaurant workers located outside the tourist areas, where the characteristics of work situations are different. Future studies can apply the current reward mechanism to investigate burnout in those restaurant workers.

Second, this research focused on the impacts of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, satisfaction, stress, and work motivation on burnout while neglecting the other variables such as work-life balance, compensation, social support, etc. Future research may consider including these suggested variables to further investigate the new outcomes of workers' burnout in family-owned restaurants.

Third, this reward mechanism of burnout reduction was articulated for the family-owned restaurants within the classification of SMEs; thus, this mechanism may not work well for other five-star restaurants that have higher professional standards than the SME classification. Therefore, the future should apply this current reward mechanism to test in those restaurants to come up with new results and conclusions.

Finally, this study design concentrated on the quantitative approach rather than the qualitative approach. Future studies may consider applying the qualitative approach to perform an in-depth interview to further investigate in detail how the related factors influence employee burnout in family-owned restaurants. Thus, more insightful information can be found so that newly suggested managerial, policy and societal implications can be provided.

Ethical approval

The aforementioned project and informed consent were reviewed and approved by Ethics Committee in Human Research Walailak University on 7th November 2024, following the Declaration of Helsinki under the approval number: WUEC-24-384-01.

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