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Career management, psychological contract fulfillment, and well-being in hospitality: comparing generations X and Y

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ABSTRACT

Past research has provided valuable insights into generational differences in career-related factors, yet the impact of these differences on well-being and the underlying mechanisms driving this relationship remains less understood. Grounded in social exchange theory, this study investigates generational differences – specifically between Generation X (Gen Xers) and Generation Y (Millennials) – in the relationships between organisational career management (OCM), psychological contract fulfilment, and two key indicators of well-being, namely, work engagement and job burnout. Focusing on the hospitality workforce, which faces significant career opportunity limitations and well-being challenges, this study surveyed 550 employees across 20 medium- and large-sized hotels in Thailand. Our findings show that OCM had indirect effects on both work engagement and job burnout through psychological contract fulfilment. These indirect effects were more pronounced for Millennials than for Gen Xers, which suggests that Millennials are more sensitive to OCM. Group difference analyses further reveal that Millennials, compared to Gen Xers, perceived lower OCM and psychological contract fulfilment, and experienced lower work engagement and higher job burnout. These results underscore the importance of tailoring career management practices to accommodate a multi-generational workforce.

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Organizational career management; work engagement; job burnout; psychological contract fulfilment; generational differences; social exchange theory

Introduction

A decline in workers' well-being is a longstanding concern for the hospitality industry (O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Saito et al., 2025), which can be attributed to several precarious working conditions such as shift work, non-weekend days off, and physically demanding jobs (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). The devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including widespread layoffs, heightened job insecurity and COVID-related stress, also took a substantial toll on hospitality workers' mental and physical health (Jung et al., 2021; Popa et al., 2023; Tu et al., 2021; Vo-Thanh et al., 2022). Even in the aftermath of the pandemic, the lingering effects of this traumatic period persist, with many experienced workers opting not to return to the industry, whereas those who have remained face the challenges of increased workloads (Kasemsuk, 2022). Consequently, addressing

how to promote hospitality workers' well-being has become a paramount priority, as this sector strives to rebuild in the post-pandemic landscape (Saito et al., 2025).

Addressing these challenges requires a renewed focus on human resource development (HRD) – which integrates training, organisational development, and career development efforts to enhance individual, group, and organisational effectiveness (McLagan, 1989). HRD is particularly crucial in adapting to a workforce with evolving expectations, especially as demographic shifts reshape the industry (Barron et al., 2007; Eyoun et al., 2020; Raub et al., 2024; Solnet & Hood, 2008; Solnet et al., 2019). Prior studies suggest that Millennials (Generation Y) tend to hold higher expectations compared to Generation X (e.g. Brant & Castro, 2019; Twenge et al., 2010; Twenge et al., 2008a; Twenge et al., 2008b), especially in terms of career advancement and opportunities for personal development (Gursoy et al., 2013; Raub et al., 2024), which may shape how they perceive and respond to HRD initiatives (Gursoy et al., 2008; Hess & Jepsen, 2009; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Lub et al., 2016). However, these characterisations remain debated (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Stewart et al., 2017), and recent meta-analyses point to relatively modest generational differences in workplace attitudes (Cucina et al., 2018; Ravid et al., 2025). This ongoing scholarly tension highlights the importance of further empirical research – particularly on the psychological mechanisms that may account for nuanced generational patterns in workplace well-being.

Against this backdrop, this present study examines whether and how organisational career management (OCM) – defined as deliberate actions undertaken by the organisation to plan and manage the careers of their employees (Arnold, 1997; Eby et al., 2005; Guan et al., 2015; Sturges et al., 2005) – influences the well-being of two key generational cohorts: Gen Xers (born between 1965 and 1980) and Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996). Specifically, we ask: *Is there a significant difference in how these two generations assess OCM and how does it impact their well-being?* These two cohorts are especially relevant as they constitute the largest segments of the hospitality workforce (Raub et al., 2024; Terrazas & Zhao, 2023), with Millennials projected to dominate the industry until the early 2040s (Terrazas & Zhao, 2023). Our study focuses on two crucial and distinct dimensions of employees' psychological well-being: work engagement and job burnout (Salanova et al., 2010; Salmela-Aro et al., 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Understanding the relationship between OCM and well-being is especially pertinent in hospitality, where career development opportunities may be perceived as limited (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019), and where recent studies indicate increasing turnover intentions and career shifts among employees (Bufquin et al., 2021; Popa et al., 2023).

Guided by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), we further examine whether the relationship between OCM and well-being operates through perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment – the extent to which employees believe their organisation has met implicit and explicit obligations (Rousseau, 1995). With multiple generational cohorts in the workforce, discrepancies can arise between employees' expectations and the actual experiences they receive (Ng & Parry, 2016; Twenge & Campbell, 2008). This issue is particularly pronounced in light of economic pressures and shifts in the labour market, which have made it more challenging for employers to maintain implicit psychological contracts (Perkins et al., 2022; Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). We argue that these discrepancies play a critical role in shaping how OCM affects the well-being of employees across different generational cohorts. Specifically, we expect that Millennials may be

more sensitive to unmet expectations around fairness, growth, and recognition – core elements of how they conceptualise work – compared to Gen Xers (Bal, Kooij, et al., 2013; Eyoun et al., 2020; Stewart et al., 2017), and that psychological contract fulfilment will play a stronger mediating role in the OCM – well-being relationship for Millennials, reflecting generational differences in how developmental opportunities are perceived and reciprocated.

Our study contributes to this growing body of work in two meaningful ways. First, while prior studies have shed important light on the relationship between several HRD practices and psychological contract fulfilment (e.g. Bal et al. 2013a; Eyoun et al., 2020; Sturges et al., 2005), no prior research has examined whether the link between OCM and psychological contract fulfilment translates to work engagement and job burnout. By linking OCM to both work engagement and job burnout via psychological contract fulfilment, our study extends the scope of existing OCM research to include both positive and negative psychological states. Second, although previous studies have examined how generational differences shape perceptions of career development opportunities (Raub et al., 2024) and psychological contracts (Eyoun et al., 2020; Hess & Jepsen, 2009; Lub et al., 2012), as well as their implications for employee commitment and turnover intentions (Hess & Jepsen, 2009; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Lub et al., 2016), our study brings together OCM, social exchange dynamics, generational perspectives, and well-being – an intersection that has received relatively limited empirical attention.

We examine the above questions in the context of Thailand’s hospitality and tourism industry. Over the past decade, tourism has fuelled the country’s economic growth, contributing approximately 15% of GDP annually (MOTS, 2021a). In 2019, the tourism sector contributed 18.21% of the GDP, surpassing the global average of 10.4% (Manakitsomboon, 2021). Recognized as a top-10 global tourist destination (UNWTO, 2020), Thailand attracted nearly 40 million international visitors that year (MOTS, 2021b). Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted this trajectory, leaving over 1 million workers in the sector unemployed. Although recovery is underway, hospitality workers continue to face heavy workloads (Kasemsuk, 2022) and limited career advancement prospects (Shoowong, 2023), making this context a compelling setting for understanding OCM, psychological contracts, and generational well-being.

Theory and hypotheses

Social exchange theory and employees’ well-being

According to Salmela-Aro et al. (2009), two critical indicators of employees’ well-being and career adaptation are work engagement and job burnout. Work engagement refers to a positive, fulfilling state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2002), while burnout reflects a state of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). Notably, we measured job burnout through its core dimension of emotional exhaustion because it is widely considered the most central and often the initial manifestation of this debilitating syndrome. Numerous theoretical frameworks have been used to explain these two outcomes (e.g. Bakker & Demerouti, 2018; Benitez & Medina, 2022; Fisher, 2010), but our study draws on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which offers an important

foundation for understanding how perceptions of organisational treatment shape emotional responses at work.

Blau (1964) distinguished between economic and social exchanges. While economic exchanges are transactional and explicit, social exchanges are relational and grounded in trust, mutual commitment, and the exchange of socio-emotional resources. Importantly, these exchanges involve *open-ended, long-term obligations* rather than *immediate quid pro quo*. Employees interpret how they are treated by their organisations through this lens, and when they perceive high-quality exchanges, they are more likely to respond with positive attitudes and behaviours (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). This reciprocity is driven by an aversion to indebtedness, motivating employees to ‘repay’ the organisation through effort and loyalty (Greenberg, 1980). Importantly, while social exchanges can form with supervisors or peers, the organisation itself, often represented by top leadership (King, 2004), serves as a key agent in fulfilling career-related expectations. Leaders, as ‘gatekeepers’ of career opportunities and resource allocation, signal whether the organisation is committed to employee development.

Prior research supports the social exchange logic. Schaufeli (2006) proposed that burnout arises from a breakdown in reciprocal exchanges, particularly in emotionally demanding settings. When employees perceive that their investment exceeds what they receive in return – whether in support, recognition, or development – burnout ensues. In this view, burnout is not merely emotional exhaustion, but a relational failure rooted in perceived imbalance. Soares and Mosquera (2019) similarly showed that fulfilment of psychological contracts can foster a sense of fairness and reciprocity, increasing work engagement. Bal, Kooij, et al. (2013) provided further evidence that perceived organisational investments (e.g. training, mentoring, career planning) function as social exchange signals that strengthen work engagement, while their absence can erode trust and lead to disengagement.

In this study, we position OCM as a central conduit of social exchange. As a deliberate and visible investment in employees’ future (Arnold, 1997; Sturges et al., 2005), OCM is interpreted not just functionally but symbolically – a gesture that employees interpret as a marker of relational commitment and respect. When employees perceive OCM practices as fair, consistent, and meaningful, they are more likely to reciprocate with heightened engagement and reduced burnout. Conversely, when such support is absent or perceived as insufficient, employees may feel shortchanged, leading to emotional frustration and burnout – a pattern that aligns with Adams (1965) equity theory – which posits that perceived imbalance leads to distress – and Hobfoll and Shirom’s (2000) notion of resource loss spirals.

Organizational career management, psychological contract fulfillment, and well-being

Organizational career management (OCM) encompasses provisions of career planning (e.g. mentoring and individual development plans [IDP]), career path information, succession planning, training opportunities and job opportunities for learning new skills (e.g. job rotation and various task options) (Eby et al., 2005; Sturges et al., 2002). This contrasts with individual career management (ICM), which involves individuals’ proactive efforts to shape the direction of their own careers, thereby asserting agency over their life course

(King, 2004). Previous research has shown that OCM is positively related to organisational commitment (De Vos et al., 2008; Sturges et al., 2002), satisfaction with the promotion process (Eby et al., 2005), career satisfaction (Guan et al., 2015), career progress (De Vos et al., 2008) and reduced turnover intentions (Guan et al., 2015; Holtschlag et al., 2020).

Our study proposes that OCM positively influences employees' well-being through the mediating role of psychological contract fulfilment – a key indicator of the social exchange process (Colquitt et al., 2014; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005) and also a central concept in the HRM literature (Perkins et al., 2022). Psychological contracts represent employees' beliefs about the reciprocal obligations between themselves and their organisation (Rousseau, 1989, 1990, 1995). These contracts are inherently subjective, as employers and employees may interpret obligations and contractual terms differently (Rousseau, 1989). Consequently, an employee may perceive inequitable treatment even when the employer views the exchange as entirely fair. Factors such as explicit promises during recruitment, the organisation's public image, and employee tenure shape these perceived obligations (Rousseau, 1989, 2001). However, once hired, the extent to which employers live up to their commitments play a significant role in shaping employees' views about psychological contract fulfilment (Lee et al., 2011; Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994).

In this respect, psychological contract fulfilment reflects an overall evaluation of the degree to which an exchange partner (e.g. the organisation) has fulfilled the obligations that were promised (Robinson & Morrison, 1995, 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). The emphasis is on the perceived discrepancy between what is promised and what is received (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005). The failure to honour a promise – a breach of psychological contract – can be particularly damaging, as it involves a betrayal of relational trust due to the breaking of the promise, which transcends mere unmet expectations (Robinson & Morrison, 2000; Robinson & Rousseau, 1994; Rousseau, 1989). Within the hospitality sector, where job roles often involve non-standard schedules and limited predictability around advancement (Barron et al., 2007; McMahon & Quinn, 1995; Nachmias et al., 2014), maintaining relational psychological contracts can be especially challenging (Wallace & Coughlan, 2023). This mismatch may erode employees' optimism about long-term career prospects, contributing to burnout (Zacher & Rudolph, 2021). Conversely, when organisations offer career development and growth opportunities, they fulfill employees' psychological contract, which in turn strengthens engagement and commitment (Bal, Kooij, et al., 2013). Thus, this study hypothesises the following.

Hypothesis 1: OCM is positively related to work engagement via the mediating role of psychological contract fulfillment.

Hypothesis 2: OCM is negatively related to job burnout via the mediating role of psychological contract fulfillment.

The moderating role of generational differences

A generation is defined as 'an identifiable group that shares birth year, age location, and significant life events at critical development stages' (Kupperschmidt, 2000, p. 364). Most contemporary organisations now employ four generational cohorts: Baby Boomers (born

between 1945 and 1964), Generation X (Gen Xers: born between 1965 and 1980), Generation Y (Millennials: born between 1981 and 1996), and Generation Z (born between 1996 and 2011) (Rudolph et al., 2018; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Terrazas & Zhao, 2023). Our study focuses on Gen Xers and Millennials – the two largest cohorts in today’s hospitality workforce (Eyoum et al., 2020; Raub et al., 2024; Supanti & Butcher, 2019). Although Baby Boomers dominated the workforce from the late 1970s through 2011, many have since retired, allowing Gen Xers to assume leadership roles and Millennials to expand into mid-level positions. Gen X briefly held majority representation from 2012 to 2018, but was soon surpassed by Millennials, who are projected to remain the largest cohort until the early 2040s (Terrazas & Zhao, 2023).

Gen Xers are often described as self-directed, independent and sceptical (Mahmoud et al., 2021). Growing up during significant societal shifts, such as the rise of technology and the decline of traditional job security, this generation developed a pragmatic outlook. To illustrate, during COVID-19, Gen Xers demonstrated greater resilience and a stronger sense of coherence (Angeles & Perkins, 2023), likely due to their experience in navigating economic fluctuations during their formative years. In contrast to Baby Boomer who are known for embracing demanding workloads, Gen Xers prioritise achieving a harmonious work-life balance (Lub et al., 2012; Waltz et al., 2020) along with job security and job autonomy (Lub et al., 2012).

Millennials, by contrast, are often characterised by high self-esteem and elevated expectations – traits that have earned them the label ‘Generation Me’ (Twenge, 2006). The shared experiences of being the most educated generation, combined with high expectations instilled from an early age, may have heightened their career expectations (Brant & Castro, 2019). This generation grew up in a period of economic prosperity and low unemployment (Solnet & Hood, 2008), fostering a belief that they can achieve anything they desire. This mindset is further reinforced by their upbringing, which promotes preference for freedom (Cennamo et al., 2008) and a dislike for excessive rules (Gursoy et al., 2008, 2013). Millennials typically have a strong sense of self-confidence, expect to be respected, and desire responsibility early in their careers (Gursoy et al., 2008; Solnet & Hood, 2008). Twenge and colleagues (Twenge et al., 2010, Twenge et al., 2008a, 2008b) have documented Millennials’ higher self-esteem, lower need for social approval, and greater assertiveness compared to previous generations. Even in the aftermath of economic downturns, Millennials have continued to expect substantial developmental opportunities, job enrichment, and competitive compensation (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010).

Nonetheless, rather than relying on generational stereotypes, Stewart et al. (2017) argue that intergenerational differences in the workplace can be understood through the reframing of three key motivational pillars: duty, drive, and reward. First, unlike previous generations, which often equate commitment with going the extra mile, Millennials align their effort with clearly defined tasks – not out of disengagement, but as a redefinition of obligation in a digitally fluid work environment. Second, Millennials derive drive less from hierarchy and more from transparent, collaborative environments, making them more sensitive to communication failures, fairness breaches, and lack of recognition. Third, in terms of reward, Millennials, raised in feedback-rich environments, expect ongoing, personalised validation rather than delayed recognition tied to tenure. These shifts

suggest that unmet expectations – around autonomy, feedback, or perceived fairness – may weigh more heavily on Millennials, amplifying the negative effects of psychological contract breach on well-being.

Empirical studies reinforce these generational patterns. Millennials report greater emphasis on recognition (Gursoy et al., 2013) as well as supervisory support, career development, comfort, compensation and work-life balance (Raub et al., 2024). They also show stronger aspirations for leadership roles than their Gen X counterparts (Bresman & Rao, 2017). When these expectations are unmet, Millennials report lower organisational commitment and stronger intentions to quit (Lub et al., 2016). Moreover, they react more negatively to job insecurity (Jung et al., 2021) and performance appraisal dissatisfaction (Eyoum et al., 2020), suggesting a heightened sensitivity to breaches in perceived reciprocity.

Despite these important findings, research has yet to examine whether Millennials are more responsive to OCM than Gen Xers – and if so, whether psychological contract fulfilment mediates this relationship. Moreover, it remains unclear whether these mechanisms ultimately translate into enhanced or diminished well-being. Adding further complexity, several meta-analyses cast doubt on the magnitude and practical relevance of generational differences. While Campbell et al. (2015) argue that ‘generational differences are real and useful’ (p. 324), others contend that observed differences are minimal (Costanza et al., 2012; Cucina et al., 2018; Ravid et al., 2025) and may reflect stereotypes (Costanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Stewart et al., 2017) or age effects rather than distinct generational identities (Twenge et al., 2010). These critiques underscore the need for studies that move beyond descriptive labels and examine the mechanisms through which generational differences manifest (Ravid et al., 2025).

Based on the empirical evidence and theoretical rationale discussed above, we argue that Millennials are more likely to interpret OCM as a relational investment, leading to greater psychological contract fulfilment, higher engagement, and lower burnout. Conversely, when OCM falls short, Millennials are more prone to experience psychological contract breach – triggering stronger emotional responses such as burnout and disengagement. This pattern reflects a heightened sensitivity to perceived fairness and reciprocity, in line with social exchange theory. Integrating this framework clarifies why social exchange breakdowns may carry greater emotional weight for Millennials, reinforcing the generational moderation effects hypothesised in this study. Thus, we propose the following hypotheses.

Hypothesis 3: The indirect positive relationship between OCM and work engagement via psychological contract fulfilment is moderated by generational cohorts, such that the indirect relationship is stronger for Millennials than for Gen Xers.

Hypothesis 4: The indirect negative relationship between OCM and job burnout via psychological contract fulfilment is moderated by generational cohorts, such that the indirect relationship is stronger for Millennials than for Gen Xers.

Methodology

Sample overview and data collection procedures

This research was funded by Thailand's National Science, Research, and Innovation Fund (NSRF) in 2023 (Grant No. MAN6701258S) and received the institution's ethics approval. We collected survey data from full-time, local Thai employees working in 20 hotels in a large province in Southern Thailand, an important tourist destination in this region. The hotels range in size from medium (8 hotels) to large (12 hotels) and are all owned and managed by local Thais. In the local context, the room capacity of a medium-sized hotel ranges from 60 to 149, whereas a large hotel has a room capacity of at least 150. We deliberately chose medium- and large-sized hotels so that they have sufficient internal resources for managing employees' careers. A total of 1,000 survey questionnaires were distributed, with the assistance of personnel and administrative departments. Participants were informed that the researchers were solely interested in gathering data from Gen X and Millennial employees, although there was a possibility that individuals outside these generations may have inadvertently participated. They were also assured that their personal identities would remain anonymous and were instructed to fold and staple the questionnaires upon completion.

After a period of 2 months, we were able to collect 590 usable questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 59.00%. Respondents who did not belong to the two generational cohorts were excluded from the survey, resulting in a final sample size of 550. Generally speaking, a sample size of over 200 is considered fairly large for structural equation modelling (SEM) analyses (Kline, 2011). We also conducted a G*Power analysis (Faul et al., 2009), setting an alpha level set at $p = .05$, with a medium effect size of .15, and a statistical power of 0.80, on a basis of 11 predictor variables analysed. The results indicated that the minimum sample size was 123, confirming that our sample size was sufficiently large.

Measurements

All the measurements were originally developed in English in previous research, and thus they were back-translated into the Thai language. We used different scale format types to mitigate the issue of common method bias (CMB) (Jordan & Troth, 2020). *Organizational career management (OCM)* was measured using 10 items adapted from Eby et al. (2005), comprising 5 clusters of practices including career planning and exploration (2 items) (i.e. mentoring programmes and individual development plans), future strategic planning (2 items) (i.e. succession plans for important positions and promotability forecasting), internal labour market information (2 items) (i.e. provisions of information about career paths and job posting of internal promotion opportunities), formal training (2 items) (i.e. training opportunities to improve work-related knowledge and soft skills), and job opportunities for learning new skills (2 items) (i.e. job rotation opportunities and various task options). This measure was based on a 5-point Likert type format (1 = *not applicable at all*, 5 = *applied extensively*). *Psychological contract fulfilment* was measured using the items adapted from the study by Guest and Conway (2002). Respondents were asked to report the extent to which the hotel has delivered on its promises and shown commitment. This measurement was based on a 7-point Likert type

format (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*). *Work engagement* was measured using the 9-item scale developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003). This measurement was based on a 6-point Likert type format (0 = *never*, 6 = *always*). Finally, job burnout was measured with five items derived from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Maslach & Jackson, 1981). This measurement was based on a 5-point Likert type format (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

Generation was coded as 0 for Gen Xers (born between 1965) and 1980) and 1 for Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996). Our statistical analyses also controlled for several demographic variables including gender (0 = men, 1 = women), organisational tenure (in years), salary (in Baht), job types (1 = operational workers and 0 = otherwise [non-operational workers]) and marital status (0 = single, 1 = otherwise [married, divorced, or widowed]). Furthermore, we controlled for talent status by asking the respondents to identify themselves as either talents (coded as 1) or average performers (coded as 0). This was done to isolate the effects of expectations that talented employees may hold for their organisations (Ehrnrooth et al., 2018). Finally, we controlled for hotel size (0 = medium-sized and 1 = large-sized) as it may influence workers' well-being (Sun et al., 2023).

Data analysis procedures

Given the hierarchical data structure (i.e. the workers were nested in 20 hotels), we conducted structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis in Mplus Version 8.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2018) using the TYPE = COMPLEX option for clustered data, which adjusts standard errors and hence provides appropriate statistical significance tests. We first examined the validity and reliability of variables via a measurement model (confirmatory factor analysis [CFA]). Several indices were used including the relative Chi-square (χ^2/df), the comparative fit index (CFI) and the Tucker – Lewis index (TLI), and RMSEA. The hypotheses were then examined via two structural models: a latent mediation model and a latent moderated mediation model. To determine the statistical significance of the interaction term, the log-likelihood ratio test was performed (see Maslowsky et al., 2015 for a detailed procedure).

Results

Descriptive statistics

As can be seen in Table 1, the study sample consisted primarily of respondents from large-sized hotels (58.90%). The majority of them were female (53.50%), with an average age of 37.76 and tenure of 6.48 years. The majority of respondents held an undergraduate degree (42.40%) and were single (50.40%). Operational workers made up the majority of respondents (71.50%), with the majority of them (68.40%) earning less than 15,000 Baht per month. Finally, 21.60% of employees identified themselves as talents.

Bivariate correlations

As shown in Table 2, all the study constructs were significantly correlated in the predicted directions. For example, OCM was significantly related to psychological contract

Table 1. Sample characteristics.

Variables	Frequency	Percent
1. Hotel Size		
Medium-sized (8 hotels) (room capacity = 60 to 149)	226	41.1
Large-sized (12 hotels) (room capacity = 150 and above)	324	58.9
2. Gender	256	46.5
Men	294	53.5
Women		
3. Age ($M = 37.76$ years; $SD = 8.27$ years)	204	37.1
Gen Xers (aged 41–56)	346	62.9
Millennials (aged 25–40)		
4. Marital status	277	50.4
Single	248	45.1
Married	25	4.5
Divorced/widowed		
5. Education	233	42.4
Below bachelor's	308	56
Bachelor's	9	1.6
Master's		
6. Jobs	393	71.5
Operational workers	29	5.3
Senior workers	69	12.5
Supervisors	25	4.5
Managers	10	1.8
Executives	24	4.4
Others		
7. Tenure ($M = 6.48$ years; $SD = 6.26$ years)	293	53.3
Less than 5 years	164	29.8
5–10	58	10.6
11–20	31	5.6
22–30	4	0.7
31 and above		
8. Salary (Baht)	376	68.4
Less than 15,000	134	24.4
15,001–30,000	21	3.8
30,001–45,000	10	1.8
45,001–60,000	9	1.6
More than 60,000		
9. Talent (self-rated)		
Yes (I consider myself a talent)	119	21.6
No (I do not consider myself a talent)	431	78.4
Total	550	100

fulfilment ($r = .739, p < .001$), work engagement ($r = .613, p < .001$) and job burnout ($r = -.114, p < .001$). None of the variables had correlations higher than $r = .80$, suggesting that multicollinearity was unlikely to be an issue.

The measurement model

CFAs were conducted to determine the reliability and validity of the latent constructs. The proposed four-factor (second-order) model were found to fit the data quite well ($\chi^2 = 1082.372, df = 420, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 2.57$; RMSEA = .05; CFI = .96; TLI = .95; SRMR = .03). When all the factors were combined (a one-factor model), it fitted the data poorly ($\chi^2 = 7665.452, df = 434, p < .001, RMSEA = .17$; CFI = .56; TLI = .53; SRMR = .14). To test for convergent validity – demonstrating that the items adequately represent the construct, factor loadings were examined. As shown in Table 3, all factor loadings were above .80. The average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct was greater than the

Table 2. Bivariate correlations.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Engagement	4.38	1.21	(.94)											
2. Burnout	2.76	1.01	-.215**	(.88)										
3. OCM	3.65	0.79	.613**	-.114**	(.91)									
4. PCF	4.90	1.36	.597**	-.143**	.739**	(.91)								
5. Gender	1.53	0.50	-.0033	0.002	0.010	0.054								
6. Generations	0.63	0.48	-.092*	0.036	-.146**	-.092*	0.038							
7. Education	1.59	0.52	-.0012	-.0017	0.015	0.078	0.019	-.0065						
8. Tenure	6.48	6.26	.160**	-.0008	.193**	.112**	-.002	-.458**	.001					
9. Salary	1.44	0.79	.093*	-.0062	.101*	.093*	0.003	-.0058	.292**	-.0016				
10. Talent	1.78	0.41	.143**	.087*	.160**	.181**	.101*	0.02	0.046	0.064	0.03			
11. Jobs	1.29	0.45	.127**	0.011	.098*	.093*	0.033	-.0081	0.061	.117**	.462**	0.03		
12. Marital	1.50	0.50	0.024	0.024	0.073	0.049	-.0036	-.277**	-.0026	.221**	0.009	0.03	.105*	
13. Hotel Size	1.59	0.49	0.081	-.0079	0.074	.122**	-.0009	-.152**	.120**	.111**	.203**	-.011	.160**	.142**

**p < .01; PCF = psychological contract fulfilment; Values in the parentheses on the diagonal are the square roots of AVE (Average Variance Extracted).

Table 3. Measurement items, factor loadings, AVE, and CR.

Constructs and items	Factor loadings
<i>Organizational Career Management (AVE = 0.84; CR = 0.96; α = 0.94)</i>	
1. Internal Market Information (2 items) (AVE = 0.71; CR = 0.83)	0.926
My organisation provides satisfactory career ladders and paths.	0.856
My organisation provides job posting for internal promotion opportunities.	0.832
2. Career Planning (2 items) (AVE = 0.77; CR = 0.87)	0.931
My organisation provides access to mentoring programs.	0.879
My organisation provides employees with individual development plans (IDPs).	0.878
3. Future Planning (2 items) (AVE = 0.67; CR = 0.80)	0.880
My organisation has clear succession plans for important positions.	0.765
My organisation engages in promotability forecasting.	0.870
4. Formal Training (2 items) (AVE = 0.76; CR = 0.86)	0.927
My organisation provides training opportunities to improve knowledge and skills.	0.839
My organisation conducts training on career development for employees.	0.899
5. Informal training (2 items) (AVE = 0.70; CR = 0.82)	0.913
My organisation provides job rotation opportunities to enhance employees' knowledge and skills.	0.796
My organisation offers various task options that allow employees to improve their skills and competencies.	0.875
<i>Psychological contract fulfillment (AVE = 0.83; CR = 0.97; α = 0.97)</i>	
1. I feel that my organisation has delivered on its promises and shown commitment in providing me with career stability.	0.922
2. I feel that my organisation has delivered on its promises and shown commitment to assign interesting tasks to me.	0.934
3. I feel that my organisation has delivered on its promises and shown commitment in order to make executives and supervisors fair.	0.937
4. I feel that my organisation has delivered on its promises and shown commitment in ensuring that employees are treated equally.	0.929
5. I feel that my organisation has delivered on its promises and shown commitment in helping me deal with various problems outside of work.	0.850
6. I feel that my organisation has delivered on its promises and shown commitment to provide fair compensation for the work I do.	0.912
7. I feel that my organisation has delivered on its promises and shown commitment in giving me a career.	0.903
<i>Work Engagement (AVE = 0.90; CR = 0.96; α = 0.97)</i>	
1. Vigor (3 items) (AVE = 0.87; CR = 0.95)	0.919
At my work, I feel bursting with energy.	0.943
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	0.961
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	0.891
2. Dedication (3 items) (AVE = 0.83; CR = 0.94)	0.999
I am enthusiastic about my job.	0.936
My job inspires me.	0.943
I am proud on the work that I do.	0.857
3. Absorption (3 items) (AVE = 0.82; CR = 0.93)	0.924
I feel happy when I am working intensely.	0.922
I am immersed in my work.	0.870
I get carried away when I'm working.	0.924
<i>Burnout (AVE = 0.79; CR = 0.95; α = 0.95)</i>	
1. I feel emotionally drained from my work.	0.893
2. I feel used up at the end of the workday.	0.832
3. I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	0.902
4. I feel bored with my job.	0.921
5. I feel like I'm running out of patience to continue with my work.	0.887

Note. All the factor loadings were significant at the $p < 0.001$ level; α = Cronbach's Alpha; AVE = Average Variance Extracted; CR = Composite Reliabilities.

recommended threshold of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Furthermore, the composite reliabilities (CRs) ranged from .80 to .97, exceeding the recommended value of .70 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988), and Cronbach's Alpha (α) values were all above .70 (Nunnally, 1978). Discriminant validity, which assesses whether constructs are distinct from one

another, was also tested using the square roots of the AVEs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As shown in Table 1, the size of AVEs was greater than the correlations between the variable and other variables, indicating discriminant validity among the constructs.

Common method bias (CMB)

Due to the use of self-reports in this study, we conducted Harman’s single-factor test to examine the possible issue of CMB (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Unrotated principal component factor analysis showed that four factors accounted for 77.84% of the variance and that the first-largest factor accounted for 49.72% of the variance, less than 50%. Therefore, we concluded that CMB was not a major issue in this study (Jordan & Troth, 2020).

The structural model

Mediation analysis

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 1, OCM had a direct positive relationship with psychological contract fulfilment ($\beta = .782, p < .001$), whereas psychological contract fulfilment had a direct positive relationship with work engagement ($\beta = .313, p < .010$) and a negative relationship with job burnout ($\beta = -.265, p < .050$). In the presence of psychological contract fulfilment, OCM still had a direct positive relationship with work engagement ($\beta = .416, p < .001$), but it did not have a significant relationship with job burnout ($\beta = .144, p > .100$). This suggests full mediation for job burnout but partial mediation for work engagement. Results further revealed that talented employees perceived higher levels of psychological contract fulfilment ($\beta = .054, p < .100$) and job

Table 4. Latent moderated mediation structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis results.

Predictor Variables	Mediation Model			Moderated Mediation Model		
	PCF	Work Engagement	Job Burnout	PCF	Work Engagement	Job Burnout
<i>Control Variables</i>						
Sex (1 = women)	0.062	-0.080*	-0.011	0.095	-0.172***	-0.009
Education	0.040	-0.094*	-0.016	0.193**	-0.149	0.037
Tenure (in years)	0.014	0.070	-0.025	0.009	0.011	0.000
Salary (in Baht)	0.022	0.038	-0.041	-0.050	0.023	-0.093
Talent (1 = talent)	0.054 ^t	0.035	0.163*	0.261***	0.096	0.285***
Jobs (1 = non-operational)	-0.004	-0.046	-0.068	0.083	0.151*	0.141
Marital status (1 = non-single)	0.272*	0.347	-0.171	-0.009	-0.128 ^t	0.085
Hotel size (1 = large)	-0.213	-0.383	-0.180	0.242	0.068	-0.123
<i>Mediator</i>						
PCF	-	0.313**	-0.265*	-	0.258**	-0.090*
<i>Main Predictors</i>						
OCM	0.782***	0.416***	0.144	1.093***	0.551***	-0.030
Generation (1 = Millennials)	0.037	0.068	-0.038	0.009	0.036	0.055
<i>Interaction Term</i>						
OCM x Generation	-	-	-	0.222*	-	-
R ²	.62	.50	.16	.65	.50	.16
Free parameters	-	-	135	-	-	136
Log (L)	-	-	-17975.391	-	-	-17813.913

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; ^t $p < .10$; PCF = psychological contract fulfilment. Each structural model was run simultaneously in Mplus.

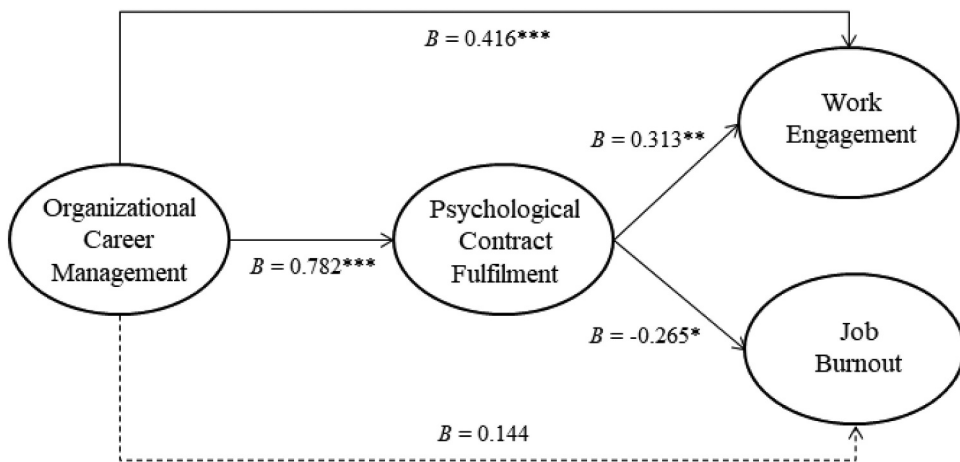


Figure 1. Mediation result.

burnout ($\beta = .163, p < .050$) than average employees, whereas female and higher educated employees perceived lower levels of work engagement ($\beta = -.080, p < .050$; $\beta = -.094, p < .050$, respectively). The mediation model can explain 62%, 50% and 16% of the variances in psychological contract fulfilment, work engagement and job burnout, respectively.

We then tested the indirect effects of OCM. First, as shown in Table 5, the indirect effect of OCM on work engagement via the mediating role of psychological contract fulfilment was significant (.390, 95% CI [.089, .662]). Likewise, the indirect effect of OCM on job burnout via the mediating role of psychological contract fulfilment was significant (-.257, 95% CI [-.467, -.043]). This provides full support to Hypotheses 1 and 2. Furthermore, we found that the first indirect effect was significantly stronger than the second one (.648, 95% CI [.257, 1.031]), suggesting that psychological contract fulfilment was a more powerful mediator in the relationship between OCM and work engagement than between OCM and job burnout.

Moderated mediation analysis

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 2, the results showed that OCM had a positive effect on psychological contract fulfilment ($\beta = 1.093, p < .050$), whereas generation had a non-significant effect ($\beta = .009, p > .100$). The interaction effect between OCM and generation on psychological contract fulfilment was significant in the predicted direction ($\beta = .222$,

Table 5. Indirect effects.

Mediated Paths	Indirect Effects				
	Est	SE	p value	95% CI	
				LLCI	ULCI
1. OCM -> PCF -> Work Engagement	.390	.148	.008	.089	.662
2. OCM -> PCF -> Job Burnout	-.257	.113	.022	-.467	-.043
Difference between 1 & 2	.648	.200	.001	.257	1.031

Note. CIs = 95% bootstrap confidence intervals (10,000 samples). LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval. PCF = psychological contract fulfilment.

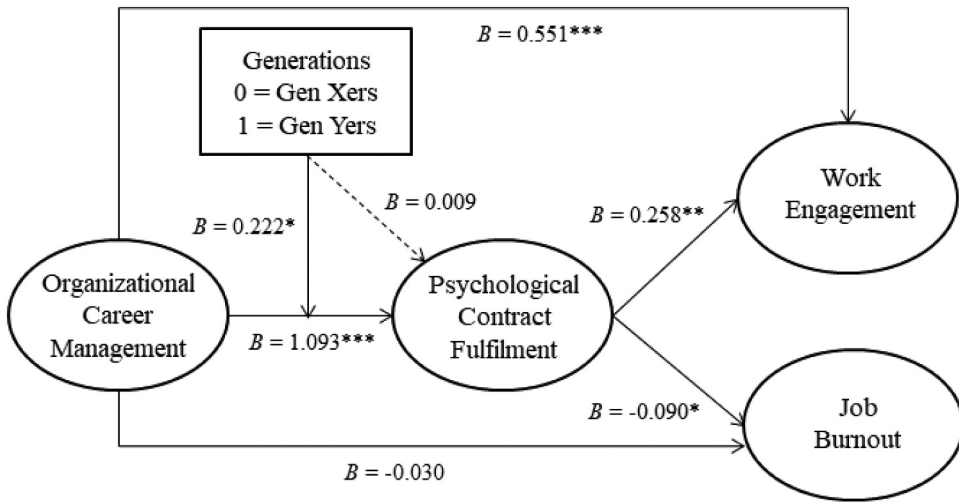


Figure 2. Moderated mediation result.

$p < .050$). This led to a 3% increase in the variance explained in psychological contract fulfilment. We determined the significance of the interaction term via a log-likelihood ratio test by comparing the log-likelihood values of the models with and without the interaction terms. The results yielded a log-likelihood difference value of $D = 161.478$, $p < .001$. As shown in Figure 3, a simple slope test further revealed that OCM had a stronger relationship with psychological contract fulfilment for Gen Y employees ($\beta = 1.315$, $p < .001$) than for Gen X employees ($\beta = .1.093$, $p < .001$). Further results from this model indicated that OCM had a direct positive relationship with psychological

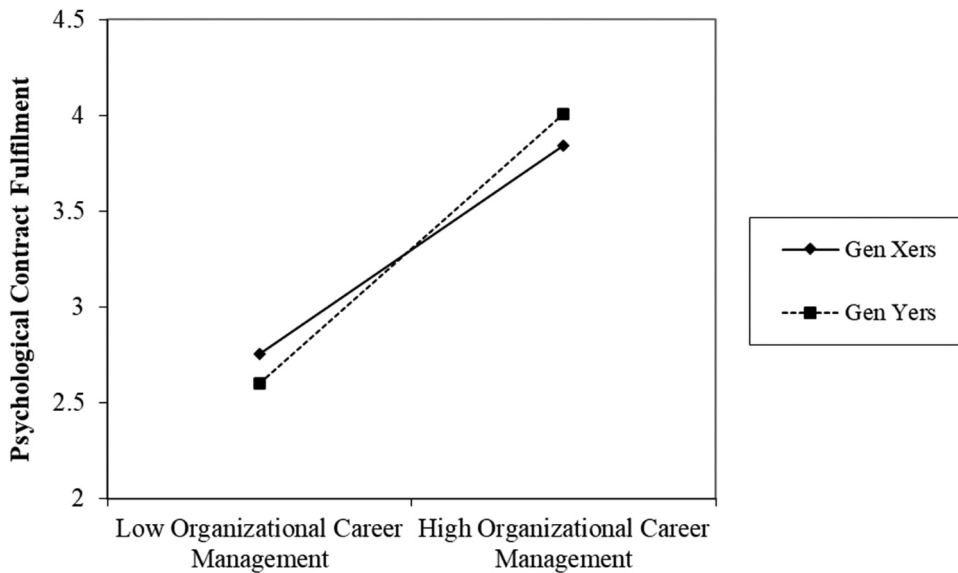


Figure 3. Interaction plot.

Table 6. Conditional indirect effects.

Mediated paths	Generations	Indirect Effects				
		<i>Est</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i> value	95% CIs	
					LLCI	ULCI
OCM → PCF → Work Engagement	Gen X	.285	.080	.000	.148	.438
	Gen Y	.342	.094	.000	.184	.367
	Difference	-.058	.025	.036	-.105	-.036
OCM → PCF → Job Burnout	Gen X	-.114	.034	.000	-.225	-.029
	Gen Y	-.137	.035	.000	-.273	-.037
	Difference	.023	.010	.024	.007	.033

Note. CIs = 95% bootstrap confidence intervals. LLCI = lower limit confidence interval; ULCI = upper limit confidence interval. PCF = psychological contract fulfilment.

contract fulfilment ($\beta = 1.093, p < .001$), whereas psychological contract fulfilment had a direct positive relationship with work engagement ($\beta = .258, p < .010$) and a negative relationship with job burnout ($\beta = -.090, p < .050$). In the presence of psychological contract fulfilment, OCM still had a direct positive relationship with work engagement ($\beta = .551, p < .001$), but it did not have a significant relationship with job burnout ($\beta = .030, p > .100$).

Furthermore, as shown in Table 6, the conditional indirect effect of OCM on work engagement via the mediating role of psychological contract fulfilment was stronger for Gen Y employees (.342, 95% CI [.184, .367]) for Gen X employees (.285, 95% CI [.148, .438]). Likewise, the conditional indirect effect of OCM on job burnout via the mediating role of psychological contract fulfilment was stronger for Gen Y employees (-.137, 95% CI [-.273, -.037]) for Gen X employees (-.114, 95% CI [-.225, -.029]). This provides full support to Hypotheses 3 and 4.

Supplemental analyses: group difference

We also conducted group difference tests to assess whether Gen Xers and Millennials differed significantly in their mean scores across the study variables. Notably, lower ratings among Millennials may reflect not necessarily worse conditions, but heightened expectations regarding organisational support and development opportunities (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010; Lub et al., 2012). The results, which can be found in Table 7, indicated that Millennials did perceive lower levels of internal markets ($p < .050$), informal training ($p < .050$), and psychological contract fulfilment ($p < .050$) than Gen Xers. Millennials also exhibited marginally significantly lower career planning ($p < .100$), work engagement ($p < .100$), and higher levels of job burnout ($p < .100$) than Gen Xers. Moreover, we examined whether workers in medium-sized hotels differed significantly from those in large-sized hotels in the mean scores of these variables, as those in larger hotels may receive more resources and experience higher levels of well-being. Results confirmed that workers in large-sized hotels rated all the variables (except job burnout) significantly higher than those in medium-sized hotels ($p < .050$).

Table 7. Supplemental analyses (group difference tests).

Variables	Hotel Size Comparison					Generational Comparison				
	Hotel Size	Mean	SD	t-test	p value	Gen	Mean	SD	t-test	p value
Organizational Career Management	Medium	3.58	0.80	3.47	0.00	Gen X	3.80	0.75	-1.76	0.08
	Large	3.70	0.78			Gen Y	3.56	0.81		
- Internal Markets	Medium	3.55	0.93	2.14	0.03	Gen X	3.75	0.86	-2.07	0.04
	Large	3.71	0.87			Gen Y	3.58	0.92		
- Career Planning	Medium	3.54	0.95	3.50	0.00	Gen X	3.81	0.89	-1.89	0.06
	Large	3.69	0.91			Gen Y	3.52	0.94		
- Future Planning	Medium	3.49	0.90	3.50	0.00	Gen X	3.69	0.87	-0.47	0.64
	Large	3.53	0.92			Gen Y	3.41	0.92		
- Formal Training	Medium	3.74	0.88	3.13	0.00	Gen X	3.95	0.86	-1.16	0.25
	Large	3.83	0.92			Gen Y	3.70	0.92		
- Informal Training	Medium	3.58	0.85	2.90	0.00	Gen X	3.81	0.80	-2.16	0.03
	Large	3.74	0.86			Gen Y	3.59	0.88		
Psychological contract fulfilment	Medium	4.70	1.39	2.16	0.03	Gen X	5.07	1.27	-2.87	0.00
	Large	5.04	1.33			Gen Y	4.81	1.41		
Work Engagement	Medium	4.26	1.22	2.15	0.03	Gen X	4.53	1.15	-1.92	0.06
	Large	4.46	1.19			Gen Y	4.30	1.23		
Job Burnout	Medium	2.86	0.94	-0.85	0.40	Gen X	2.71	1.05	1.85	0.07
	Large	2.70	1.05			Gen Y	2.79	0.99		

Discussion

Our research examines how two generational cohorts – Gen Xers and Millennials – respond to OCM and how their reactions influence two key aspects of well-being: work engagement and job burnout. The findings indicate that Millennials, compared to Gen Xers, have stronger reactions to the presence (or absence) of OCM, which subsequently affects their levels of well-being, either positively or negatively. These reactions are shaped by perceptions of whether their psychological contract with their organisation is fulfilled or unmet. Our results provide further evidence that Millennials may have higher expectations for career-related relationships with organisations than their Gen X counterparts. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications of these findings below.

Theoretical implications

Our study makes several contributions to the literature at the intersection of HRD, psychological contracts, and generational differences. First, we demonstrate that Millennials, compared to Gen Xers, exhibited heightened reactions to OCM. As illustrated in the interaction plot, high levels of perceived OCM are associated with greater psychological contract fulfilment among Millennials, which in turn enhances work engagement and reduces job burnout. In contrast, when OCM is perceived as lacking, Millennials are more likely to experience psychological contract breach, leading to diminished engagement and heightened burnout. These findings build on earlier research, which has shown Millennials' stronger responses to performance evaluations (Eyoun et al., 2020), career opportunities (Raub et al., 2024) and psychological contracts (Hess & Jepsen, 2009), and are consistent with broader claims that Millennials hold elevated expectations around career growth and organisational support (Brant & Castro, 2019; Deloitte, 2024; Twenge et al., 2008a, 2008b; Twenge et al., 2008). Crucially, our study differentiates itself by being among the first to show that these generational

differences in OCM responses manifest in distinct well-being outcomes. While prior studies have focused on affective commitment and turnover intentions (e.g. Hess & Jepsen, 2009; Lu & Gursoy, 2016; Lub et al., 2016), few have explored how perceived career support impacts both engagement and burnout. By addressing both the positive (engagement) and negative (burnout) sides of well-being (Salanova et al., 2010; Salmela-Aro et al., 2009; Schaufeli et al., 2002), our study offers a more comprehensive understanding of how HRD practices influence the complete spectrum of employees' well-being.

Moreover, our study expands on previous research by showing that the link between OCM and well-being is mediated by perceptions of psychological contract fulfilment. This reinforces the idea that the perceived fairness and reciprocity of the employer-employee relationship are fundamental to overall well-being. Notably, the finding that OCM only affects burnout through psychological contract fulfilment highlights that OCM, in itself, might not directly alleviate emotional exhaustion unless it is perceived as a fulfilment of promises and expectations. This further emphasises the social exchange aspect of the employment relationship in preventing burnout (Schaufeli, 2006). Although prior studies have examined the relationship between HRD practices and psychological contract fulfilment (e.g. Bal, Kooij, et al., 2013; Eyoun et al., 2020; Sturges et al., 2005) and how psychological contract fulfilment impacts affective commitment and turnover intentions (e.g. Lub et al., 2016; Mehta et al., 2024; Saleem et al., 2021), voluntary turnover (Sturges et al., 2005), career satisfaction (e.g. Chang et al., 2020) and work engagement (Bal, Lange, et al., 2013; Gordon & Gordon, 2020), no prior research has examined whether the connection between OCM and psychological contract fulfilment translates to work engagement and job burnout.

Crucially, our study provides key insights into the underlying mechanisms and boundary conditions through which perceived organisational career support shapes well-being among workers in different generational cohorts. While previous research has shed light on Millennials' needs and preferences (Brant & Castro, 2019; De Hauw & De Vos, 2010; Holtschlag et al., 2020; MacPepple, 2023; Pant & Venkateswaran, 2019), much of this work is grounded in mean-level comparisons (e.g. Cucina et al., 2018), focusing on differences in perceived career development (Kowske et al., 2010; Raub et al., 2024), psychological contracts (Hess & Jepsen, 2009; Lub et al., 2012), work engagement (Park & Gursoy, 2012), commitment and turnover intentions (Lub et al., 2012) and job satisfaction (Kowske et al., 2010). These descriptive approaches often stop short of explaining *why* such generational differences matter. Our study addresses this gap by uncovering the psychological mechanisms – specifically, the role of psychological contract fulfilment – that help explain why OCM impacts Millennials' emotional experiences at work more strongly than Gen Xers. This strengthens the theoretical foundation for future generational research.

Building upon previous descriptive research discussed above, our study also provides detailed evidence of generational differences in the perception of specific OCM dimensions through group mean comparisons. In contrast to prior studies, which examined isolated career practices in the context of generational differences (e.g. Kowske et al., 2010; Raub et al., 2024), we investigated the full range of career management components (see Table 3). Our results showed that Millennials rated internal markets (e.g. promotion opportunities) and informal training (e.g. opportunities to learn new skills) significantly

lower than Gen Xers. They also reported marginally lower scores on career planning (e.g. mentoring), psychological contract fulfilment, and work engagement, along with marginally higher levels of job burnout. These findings are consistent with Park and Gursoy (2012), who found that Millennial hotel employees in North America reported lower work engagement than Gen Xers who found that Millennial hotel employees in North America reported lower engagement than their older counterparts, and with a recent Forbes survey (Wong & Aditham, 2024), which showed that Millennials experience lower job satisfaction. Together, these results suggest that Millennials may enter the workplace with stronger expectations of relational exchange and career reciprocity but encounter organisational systems that fall short. This perceived mismatch may help explain their heightened sensitivity to OCM practices and the greater emotional toll they experience when these career-related expectations are unmet. Thus, the combination of moderation analysis and group mean differences offers a comprehensive understanding of generational differences in OCM and well-being.

Practical implications

Our findings suggest that relying on traditional career management practices designed for previous generations – such as tenure-based promotions – may not align with Millennials’ career expectations. Millennials prioritise not only career progression but also continuous learning, flexibility, and meaningful work experiences, making it essential for organisations to adapt their career support strategies to meet these needs (De Hauw & De Vos, 2010). In the hospitality sector – where career advancement opportunities, especially in smaller hotels, may be limited (Ariza-Montes et al., 2019), organisations can implement cost-effective OCM practices such as career mentoring, job rotation, and challenging task assignments to enhance Millennials’ engagement. Mentoring programmes, in particular, can leverage experienced employees’ expertise to foster knowledge transfer and professional growth at minimal cost. Nonetheless, while these preferences are especially pronounced among Millennials, it is important to recognise that they are not exclusive to this generation but rather vary in degree. As such, career support strategies should be designed with flexibility, ensuring that opportunities for growth and engagement remain accessible to employees of all generations.

Study limitations

Despite the above findings, there are several limitations that warrant consideration from future research. First, while our research reveals important generational patterns, it is crucial to avoid reducing these patterns to overgeneralised assumptions (Parry & Urwin, 2021). Indeed, there could be substantial variation within each generation with regard to their career expectations, which are shaped by individual experiences, values, and life circumstances (Campbell et al., 2015; Cucina et al., 2018; Parry & Urwin, 2021; Twenge et al., 2010). Thus, while practitioners can utilise our findings to increase awareness about generational dynamics, they should continue to craft flexible career management strategies that cater to individual needs and preferences as well. For example, OCM practices tend to have a stronger impact on the well-being of those with high growth mindset and needs for achievements (nAch) (Agarwal, 2022). Second, similar to most research on generational

differences, the cross-sectional nature of our study restricts our ability to make definitive causal inferences regarding the influence of OCM. However, the causal relationships among our variables were structured in line with established theory, which should help mitigate this concern. Third, our data were collected from the same source, which could raise concerns about common method bias (CMB) (Podsakoff et al., 2003). However, we attempted to minimise this potential problem through both non-statistical procedures (i.e. using multiple response formats and highly reliable and valid construct measurements) and statistical (post-hoc) procedures (i.e. Harman's single-factor test) (Fuller et al., 2016; Jordan & Troth, 2020; Min et al., 2016). Furthermore, it is important to recognise that interaction effects tend to be robust to CMB (i.e. interaction effects are attenuated in the presence of CMB) (Siemsen et al., 2010). Additionally, the use of generation as an objectively measured moderator – recorded without influence from respondents' bias – should further alleviate these underlying concerns. Finally, it is important to note that the positive effects of OCM observed in this study may be influenced by hospitality employees' fear of job loss, as well as collectivistic cultural values that cause employees to rely more on the organisation rather than exercising individual agency in career development.

Conclusion

Grounded in social exchange theory, our study demonstrates that Millennials have heightened expectations regarding organisational career management (OCM), which in turn influence their well-being. Specifically, our findings highlight the critical mediating role of psychological contract fulfilment. When organisations meet career expectations, Millennials are more likely to experience increased work engagement and reduced job burnout. These findings offer practical guidance for organisational leaders seeking to adapt career development strategies to better align with the evolving needs of different generations. As Millennials continue to shape the workforce, organisations that prioritise growth-oriented career development will be better positioned to attract, engage, and retain top talent in the hospitality industry.

Disclosure statement

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