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Social Job Resources as Sources of Meaningfulness and its Effects on Nurses' Vigor and Emotional Exhaustion: A Cross-Sectional Study among Spanish Nurses

Abstract

This study investigates the mediating role of psychological meaningfulness among social job resources (i.e., coworkers and supervisor support), vigor, and emotional exhaustion in a nursing context. In spite of progress in understanding which organizational influence affects nurses' vigor and emotional exhaustion, the psychological mechanisms assumed to underlie the associations have not been fully explored. The sample for this study consisted of 171 nurses from Spanish hospitals (54.4%) and Primary Care Centers (45.6%). The mediation model was tested using the bootstrapping procedure. Our findings confirmed that psychological meaningfulness fully mediates the impact of social job resources on vigor at work. Moreover, psychological meaningfulness partially mediated the impact of social job resources on emotional exhaustion. Results suggest that meaningfulness plays an important role in the connection between job resources, vigor, and emotional exhaustion. The findings contribute to our understanding of the psychological processes that can explain how job resources contribute to the energetic aspect of burnout and engagement among nurses. Providing nurses with more social job resources, such as coworker and supervisor support, could activate their levels of personal meaningfulness and thus enhance their levels of well-being at work.

*Keywords:* job resources; coworker support; supervisor support; meaningfulness; vigor; emotional exhaustion.

## Social Job Resources as Sources of Meaningfulness and its Effects on Nurses' Vigor and Emotional Exhaustion: A Cross-Sectional Study among Spanish Nurses

The continuing nursing shortage is a global challenge and an important current concern for several hospitals and primary health centers around the world (Heinen et al., 2013; MacLean et al., 2014). One of the main causes of this shortage is professional nurses' intention to leave, frequently due to workplace environment and psychosocial factors (e.g., stress, burnout, or job satisfaction) (Carter & Tourangeau, 2012; Heinen et al., 2013). Hence, it is necessary to investigate the factors that significantly predict nurses' well-being and motivation in order to motivate them to remain for long periods within the health organizations, thus reducing the associated costs. Among these factors, nurses' burnout and work engagement play a crucial role because they are associated with their levels of well-being, intentions to leave their profession and the quality of care (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000; Heinen et al., 2013; Kanste, 2011; Poghosyan, Clarke, Finlayson, & Aiken, 2010). Given the significance of these outcomes for health organizations, researchers have focused on identifying the antecedents of engagement and burnout in order to guide interventions and managerial practices aimed at improving them. In this study, we will focus on how social job resources can predict the energetic components of burnout and work engagement and we will also analyze the potential role of psychological meaningfulness as mediator of that association.

Emotional exhaustion refers to feelings of being overextended and exhausted by the emotional demands of one's work (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001), whereas vigor alludes to having high energy levels, resilience regarding work activities, investing effort in one's work and persisting in difficult circumstances (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). The job demands-resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2000, 2001) provides a good framework to illustrate the conditions that influence these variables. Basically, and according to the motivational process of this model, vigor is predicted by job resources (e.g., social support or performance feedback) whereas, in the health impairment process of this model, emotional exhaustion is mainly predicted by job demands (e.g., workload or emotional demands). The direct relationships between job resources and vigor have been consistently reported and shown to hold up across various studies (see meta-analysis; Halbesleben, 2010). However, there has been less research on the association between the lack of resources and emotional exhaustion (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Social support provided by coworkers and supervisors is probably the most extensively studied job resource (Bakker et al., 2004), and there is considerable evidence to suggest that this is linked to emotional exhaustion and vigor among nurses (Jones, Hocine, Salomon, Dab, & Temime, 2015; Othman & Nasurdin, 2013; Sarti, 2014). This could be because social support at work could help nurses to do their work and cope successfully with work-related stressors. However, job resources are not only necessary to cope with job demands, but they are also relevant in their own right. In this sense, recent research based on the expanded JD-R model indicates that this kind of resources can activate other psychological resources (e.g., self-efficacy or optimism) and impact on employee motivation and well-being (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007). In other words, these studies show that personal resources can have a mediating role on these relationships (Huang, Wang, & You, 2015; Quiñones, Van den Broeck, & De Witte, 2013; Trépanier, Fernet, Austin, Forest, & Vallerand, 2014; Vogt, Hakanen, Jenny, & Bauer, 2015). Notwithstanding these studies, most authors acknowledge that the psychological mechanisms assumed to underlie the association between job resources, emotional exhaustion, and engagement have not been fully explored (Albrecht, 2010; Albrecht & Su, 2012; Fernet, Austin, Trépanier, & Dussault, 2012).

### **Social Job Resources and Meaningfulness**

Social job resources refer to those aspects of the job such as emotional and instrumental support from supervisors and colleagues that could attain any of the following goals: (a) be functional in achieving work purposes; (b) decrease job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs; and (c) promote personal growth (Demerouti et al., 2000, 2001). Previous literature shows that these resources promote the workers' growth and learning while fulfilling basic human needs like autonomy, competence, relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Solky, 1996; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, de Witte, Soenens, & Lens, 2010). Likewise, social job resources could also satisfy the personal need for meaningfulness (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002; Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Vogt et al., 2015).

Psychological meaningfulness is the motivational component of a broader construct known as sense of coherence (SOC) that is defined as the global feeling of confidence that: (1) the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are structured, predictable, and explainable (*comprehensibility component*); (2) resources are available to meet the demands posed by these stimuli (*manageability component*); and (3) these demands are challenges, worthy of investment and engagement (*meaningfulness component*) (Antonovsky, 1987). Specifically, meaningfulness alludes to the extent to which people feel that life make sense emotionally and cognitively (Ryff & Singer, 1998). Accordingly, a

higher level of emotional and instrumental support at work could partially contribute to workers' meaningfulness because such support could help to satisfy basic human needs (Albrecht & Su, 2012; Vogt et al., 2015). Previous literature shows that workers feel psychological meaningfulness when their job demands include rewarding interpersonal interactions with coworkers and clients. When employees are treated with respect and dignity and are valued for their contributions, they are likely to experience meaningfulness in their interactions (Kahn, 1990; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004). Moreover, workers also acquire meaningfulness from the social identities of salient group memberships. Taking into account these arguments, we formulate the following hypotheses:

*H<sub>1</sub>. Coworker support will be significant and positively related to meaningfulness.*

*H<sub>2</sub>. Supervisor support will be significant and positively related to meaningfulness.*

### **Meaningfulness, vigor, and emotional exhaustion**

As noted above, meaningfulness has a strong motivational component because it expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring—albeit dynamic—feeling of confidence that life demands are challenges, worthy of investment and commitment (Antonovsky, 1987). Research has shown that meaningfulness and SOC are related both to work engagement and burnout (Fourie, Rothmann, & Van de Vijver, 2008; van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009; Vogt et al., 2015). Nevertheless, few investigations have focused on the specific contribution of meaningfulness to the energetic aspects of burnout and work engagement, even though meaningfulness has always been considered the core component of SOC, and the one that is most related to people's well-being.

The relationship between meaningfulness and vigor at work could be explained by the fact that people with a high degree of meaningfulness in their lives are more likely to define stressors as challenges that are welcomed and considered worthwhile to invest energy (Feldt, 1997). Moreover, as noted by Schaufeli and Bakker (2001), vigor is also characterized by some resilience and the will to invest energy and effort in one's tasks, so vigor could also benefit from high levels of meaningfulness (May et al., 2004).

However, when workers lack meaningfulness, they risk suffering from professional burnout (Pines, 1993). According to the existential approach to burnout, the cause of burnout is our need to believe that our lives are meaningful and that what we do is useful and important (Pines 1993). Work becomes a frequently chosen source of meaning for some workers, who work hard because they expect their work to give meaning to their life. When their efforts fail, they suffer burnout, showing that unfulfillment of the need of

meaningfulness is linked to emotional exhaustion and vigor (Van den Broeck et al. 2008). Taking into account these arguments, we formulate the following hypotheses:

*H<sub>3</sub>. Psychological meaningfulness will be significant and positively related to vigor at work.*

*H<sub>4</sub>. Psychological meaningfulness will be significant and negatively related to emotional exhaustion.*

### **The potential mediating role of meaningfulness**

For the purposes of this study, we founded our hypotheses on the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) and on the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which provide useful frameworks to understand the effects of job resources on vigor and emotional exhaustion via meaningfulness (Vogt et al., 2015).

On the one hand, a core assumption of the JD-R model is that the existence of job resources may promote personal resources that, in turn, may instigate a motivational process leading to vigor and secondarily reducing emotional exhaustion (see Figure 1)(Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

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Insert Figure 1 about here

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Personal resources are defined as the aspects of the self that are linked to resiliency and individuals' sense of their ability to successfully control and influence the environment (Hobfoll & Shirom 2000). Traditionally, the role of personal resources like self-efficacy or optimism has been explored in the motivational process of the JD-R model (Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). Recent research has also explored the role of other variables such as psychological empowerment, SOC, passion for work or optimism (Huang et al., 2015; Quñones et al., 2013; Trépanier et al., 2014; Vogt et al., 2015). Building upon the JD-R theoretical framework, we consider that psychological meaningfulness would be a good candidate for its integration into this model because meaningfulness is an aspect of the self that is linked to resiliency (Vogt et al., 2015). As noted by Khan (1990), feeling valued, mutual respect, appreciation, and feedback on performance are important conditions for meaningfulness, and the experience of meaningfulness, in turn, influences employee engagement (or disengagement) at work. In prior literature, only one study with Chinese workers has examined the potential mediating effect of the need for meaningfulness on the relationships between job resources and engagement (Albrecht & Su, 2012). Unexpectedly, no association was found between colleague support and engagement via meaningfulness, and the authors concluded that it could be due to the fact that, in a collectivist culture like the Chinese one, where hierarchy is strongly

emphasized, individual employees may consider their work as more meaningful when they receive support from their superiors, as opposed to support from their coworkers.

On the other hand, the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) could also support these associations because the work context involves conditions that may promote or hinder the fulfillment of basic psychological needs, such as psychological meaningfulness. For example, if workers' psychological needs are unmet due to the absence of resourceful conditions, they could either become vulnerable to emotional exhaustion or, in contrast, completely engaged (if workers' psychological needs are met) (Fernet et al., 2012; Van den Broeck et al., 2008). Taking into account these arguments, we formulate the following hypotheses:

*H<sub>5</sub>. Psychological meaningfulness will significantly mediate the relationship between (5a) coworker and vigor (5b) and coworker and emotional exhaustion.*

*H<sub>6</sub>. Psychological meaningfulness will significantly mediate the relationship between (6a) supervisor support and vigor (6b) and supervisor support and emotional exhaustion.*

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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## Method

### Sample and procedure

Nurses from various hospitals and primary care centers in Madrid (Spain) took part in our study. According to official data, in 2014, there were a total of 38.898 active professional nurses in Madrid (General Nurses' Council, 2014). This is a young population of professionals, where more than 50% are younger than 44 years of age, and most of them are women. The hospital nurses who participated in this study belonged to different care units (i.e., intensive care unit, surgical unit, reanimation unit, cardiology, oncology, and emergencies). Participants were recruited by means of a snowball technique, using the researchers' social networks. As nurses have a high overload of work and are subject to work shifts, it is sometimes difficult for them to commit to research-related activities. The use of this sampling technique gains access to samples that are difficult to reach and allows collecting a sample from a fairly diverse population, as is the case of this investigation in which nurses of different health services participated. In order to increase the response rates, all workers were sent a reminder by email about the importance of completing the questionnaires. Supervisors from different health services also collaborated in promoting participation in the study. Of the 199 surveys distributed, 171 were returned (response rate = 85%; 151 women; 15 men and 5 with missing values) from hospitals (54.4 %) and primary care centers (45.6 %).

Participant mean age was 40.73 years ( $SD = 10.62$ ). The mean amount of work per week was 36.71 hours ( $SD = 6.25$ ), the average years of work experience was 18.03 ( $SD = 10.45$ ), and the average years of tenure in their work centers was 8.52 ( $SD = 7.80$ ). Regarding type of contract, 53.8% had permanent contracts (indefinite), 26.3% had contracts for more than one year, and the rest had a fixed-term contract of less than one year (2.7% missing). Concerning the time that they interacted with their patients, 80% interacted more than 50% of their working day.

### Variables

**Coworker and Supervisor Support.** These were assessed with nine items from the Job Content Questionnaire (Karasek et al., 1998). Specifically, coworker support was measured with 5 items (e.g., “The people I work with take a personal interest in me”) and supervisor support with 4 items (e.g., “My supervisor is helpful in getting the job done”). Both variables were rated on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). In our study, Cronbach's alpha was  $\alpha = .85$  for coworker support subscale, and  $\alpha = .86$  for the supervisor support subscale.

**Meaningfulness.** This was measured with The Orientation to Life Questionnaire (OLQ; Antonovsky, 1987). The Meaningfulness subscale is made up of 8 items that participants rate on a 7-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*frequently, almost always*). Examples of these items are: “Performing my activities is...” 1 = *a source of pain and boredom*, 7 = *a source of satisfaction and pleasure*. In our study, Cronbach's alpha of this subscale was  $\alpha = .85$ .

**Emotional Exhaustion.** This was measured with four items from the subdimension of the Nurses' Burnout Syndrome Questionnaire (NBS; Garrosa, Moreno-Jiménez, Liang, & González, 2008). This 4-item scale measures the level of emotional exhaustion related to nursing activity (e.g., “I feel that daily work at hospital is wearing me out”) and is rated on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*I completely agree*) to 6 (*I completely disagree*). In our study, Cronbach's alpha of this subscale was  $\alpha = .86$ .

**Vigor at work.** Vigor was assessed with the subscale from the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2002). This 6-item scale measures the levels of energy and mental resilience while working, willingness to invest effort in one's work, and persistence in the face of difficulties (e.g., “During the task, I felt full of energy”). The scale was scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*never*) to 6 (*most of the time*). In our study, Cronbach's alpha of this subscale was  $\alpha = .85$ .

### Analysis



Data was analyzed using SPSS 22.0 software. A mediation analysis was used to establish whether the associations between job resources (i.e., coworker and supervision support), vigor, and emotional exhaustion were mediated by psychological meaningfulness (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). The procedure used herein relies on a resampling method known as bootstrapping. Bootstrapping is a nonparametric approach to effect-size estimation and hypothesis-testing that is increasingly recommended for mediation analyses (e.g., Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Bootstrapping generates an empirical approximation of the sampling distribution of a statistic by repeated random resampling of the available data, and uses this distribution to calculate *p*-values and construct confidence intervals (1,000 resamples were taken for these analyses). When the value of zero is not found in the 95% confidence interval, it is determined that the indirect effect is significantly different from zero. The bootstrap method is considered a more powerful approach than the four-step multiple regression approach developed by Baron and Kenny in 1986. The procedure described by Preacher and Hayes (2008) for testing mediating effects was employed using the macro they provide for implementing the analysis in SPSS (Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

**Results**

The correlations among all the scales are shown in Table 1. All correlations were in the expected direction. In order to test the possible presence of multicollinearity, we followed the recommendations of Kleinbaum, Kupper, and Mueller (1988). According to these authors, variance inflation factor values greater than 10 and tolerance values smaller than .10 may indicate the presence of multicollinearity. The results showed no violations of the premises underlying the regressions. Nevertheless, in order to avoid multicollinearity problems, the independent variables and the mediator were centered.

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Insert Table 1 about here
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As seen in Tables 2 and 3, coworker and supervisor support contributed to the explained variance in vigor at work ( $\Delta R^2 = .026, p < .05$  and  $\Delta R^2 = .034, p < .05$ , respectively) and in emotional exhaustion ( $\Delta R^2 = .048, p < .01$  and  $\Delta R^2 = .130, p < .001$ , respectively). In the case of vigor, after controlling for coworker support, meaningfulness added 10.1% of explained variance ( $p < .001$ ), and after controlling for supervisor support, meaningfulness added 9.7% ( $p < .001$ ). In the case of emotional exhaustion, after controlling for coworker support, meaningfulness added 6.5% of explained variance ( $p < .001$ ), and after controlling for supervisor support, this added 5.4% ( $p < .001$ ). Note also that coworker and supervisor support totally lost their effects on vigor ( $\beta = .163 > .087$  and  $\beta = .185 > .134$ , respectively) and partially on emotional exhaustion when we entered the mediator in the regression equation ( $\beta = -.220 > -.159$  and  $\beta = -$

.361 > -.323, respectively). These results would support our hypotheses 3 and 4. Moreover, our results also showed that the relations between coworker support and meaningfulness and between supervisor support and meaningfulness were significant ( $\beta = .232, p < .01$  and  $\beta = .160, p < .05$ , respectively) in line with Hypotheses 1 and 2.

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Insert Table 2 about here

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Using the bootstrap method to detect mediated effects, we can also see in Table 2 that psychological meaningfulness had significant indirect effects on the relationships between coworker support and vigor (bootstrap mean = 0.069, 95% CI [.005, .197] and between supervisor support and vigor (bootstrap mean = 0.037, 95% CI [.002, .121], in line with Hypotheses 5a and 6a. In Table 3, the indirect effect of psychological meaningfulness on the relationships between coworker support and emotional exhaustion [bootstrap mean = -0.73, 95% CI [-.178, -.130]] and between supervisor support and emotional exhaustion [bootstrap mean = -0.39, 95% CI [-.102, -.003]] are also shown, in line with Hypotheses 5b and 6b.

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Insert Table 3 about here

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**Discussion**

In this study, we determined whether coworker and supervisor support are related to the levels of nurses' vigor and emotional exhaustion through the indirect effect of meaningfulness. The study is an innovative approach to the psychological processes that may explain why social job resources contribute to the energetic aspect of burnout and engagement among nurses. These aspects contribute a new line of work focused on the in-depth study of the mechanisms that intervene in the development of healthy workplaces that can create settings with valuable opportunities to enhance employees' strengths, motivation, and well-being (Nilsson, Andersson, Ejlertsson, & Troein, 2012; Trépanier et al., 2014; Vogt et al., 2015).

Overall, results show that nurses who perceived greater coworker and supervisor support also have higher levels of vigor at work, as well as lower levels of emotional exhaustion, in line with recent research (Jones et al., 2015; Othman & Nasurdin, 2013; Sarti, 2014). Moreover, these associations were totally explained via the indirect effect of meaningfulness in the case of vigor at work, and partially explained in the case of emotional exhaustion. This means that nurses who perceive support from their colleagues and supervisors feel more motivated, energized, and less exhausted at work due to the fact that social support can increase their levels of psychological meaningfulness.

Specifically, the direct positive effect of coworker and supervisor support on nurses' vigor and emotional exhaustion could be explained by the fact that social support is functional in achieving work goals, decreasing job demands, and promoting psychological growth (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2000, 2001). Moreover, the fact that professionals feel that the people with whom they work like to work in teams, are concerned for the well-being of the rest of the members, and that the work gets done can increase their levels of job well-being because the perception of support at work is closely linked to job satisfaction. Therefore, the results are congruent with the motivational hypothesis of the JD-R model that argues that job resources are related to vigor and dedication at work and, to a lesser degree, to low levels of emotional exhaustion. However, an interesting and unexpected result emerged in our research: social job resources had a stronger direct effect to explain nurses' emotional exhaustion than their levels of vigor. Even though job resources have traditionally shown a higher degree of association with levels of vigor (Halbesleben, 2010), these results are not inconsistent with the literature and are added to the body of previous research that notes how job resources also prevent emotional exhaustion because they can also reduce job demands and activate personal resources (Bakker et al., 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

On another hand, our results showed that a higher level of emotional and instrumental support from colleagues and supervisors could contribute to workers' feeling that their lives make sense emotionally and cognitively because such support at work can contribute to satisfying a basic human need (Kahn, 1990; Ryan & Solky, 1996; Van den Broek et al., 2010). In this sense, our results are in accordance with the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) in which the work context involves conditions that may promote or hinder the fulfillment of basic psychological needs, such as meaningfulness (Baumeister & Vohs, 2002). Moreover, these results are also consistent with the motivational process of the JD-R model that establishes how job resources can activate personal resources related to resilience (Demerouti et al., 2001; Vogt et al., 2015).

This study also reveals that psychological meaningfulness is an important variable to explain nurses' vigor and emotional exhaustion. This relationship could be explained by the fact that people with a high degree of meaningfulness in their lives feel that demands and difficult life situations are worth investing energy in and are worth engaging with and committing to (Feldt, 1997). That is to say, they usually define stressors as challenges that are welcomed. In this regard, meaningfulness provides one's actions with meaning and energy, and this could promote the appearance and enhancement of workers' vigor (May et

al., 2004). However, when workers lack personal meaningfulness and other basic needs, they risk suffering from professional burnout (Pines, 1993; Van den Broeck et al., 2010). In this sense, we are building on this theoretical framework by showing how psychological meaningfulness can act as a personal resource that enhances vigor and emotional exhaustion among nurses (Fourie et al., 2008; van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009; Vogt et al., 2015; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007).

Finally, our results showed that, besides a direct effect on nurses' vigor and emotional exhaustion, coworker and supervisor support also had an indirect effect through psychological meaningfulness. This indirect effect is also in line with one of the core assumptions of the JD-R model, in which job resources could promote personal resources, which, in turn, could instigate a motivational process leading to vigor and secondarily to reducing emotional exhaustion (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Vogt et al., 2015; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007). This could be explained because feeling accepted, cared for, respected and valued from colleagues and supervisors are important conditions for meaningfulness and the experience of meaningfulness, in turn, could influence employee engagement or disengagement at work.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The present study has some shortcomings. Firstly, it is a cross-sectional study, which precludes the establishment of causal relations. We recommend future research to examine the causality of such relationships in more detail in order to reach more reliable and firm conclusions. For example, our results will need to be tested by experimental research or longitudinal studies. Secondly, we measured all data with self-report measures, which raises concerns about common-method variance. However, the self-report nature of the study is essential, given that appraisals of affective experiences are central. Thirdly, another limitation of this study is the sampling strategy (snowball technique), which may limit the generalizability of our results. Nevertheless, the overall results are promising and, due to the variety of health services examined in this study, we consider that it has good external validity. Participants in our study were predominantly female and they perceived that social resources and their consequences could vary by gender. However, the overrepresentation of the female gender in nursing is well known. Future studies should try to replicate the results with a representative sample of males and females and using other occupational samples. Moreover, future studies should also empirically examine whether the other dimensions of the SOC (i.e., comprehensibility and manageability) could also be mediators between social job resources, vigor, and emotional exhaustion. Similarly, future studies should examine whether the other

dimensions of work engagement (i.e., dedication and absorption) or burnout (cynicism and low efficacy) could be predicted by social job resources through psychological meaningfulness.

### **Conclusion and Practical implications**

Nowadays, it is increasingly clear that the interaction among organizational and personal variables is crucial to explain workers' well-being. This study shows how the support perceived by nurses from their coworkers and supervisors is essential to increase their levels of energy and motivation. Furthermore, it is once again confirmed that the organization's resources can activate and promote personal resources, allowing the job to become a source of personal growth and development for the nurses. Our study revealed that nurses who perceived support from their coworkers and supervisors felt more motivated, energized, and less exhausted, due to the fact that social support at work increased their levels of psychological meaningfulness. In a profession such as nursing, where social relations are abundant, it is very relevant to perceive social support from coworkers and supervisors, as well as to create meaning from that social support. Moreover, in a Mediterranean culture like the one where this study was carried out, social relationships are deeply valued and, accordingly, positive appraisal of the support given by coworkers and supervisors may be decisive to workers' job satisfaction and to their high motivation. These cultural differences must be taken into account when planning organizational policies, as it has been observed that not every resource is equally considered in different cultures (Albrecht & Su, 2012). As effective measures for the promotion of social support at work, healthcare organizations and supervisors should implement programs aimed at improving group cohesion among the members of the nursing teams; improving communication among members and the different hierarchies; and reinforcing social bonds so that they are more stable and lasting, as well as perceived as more satisfactory. This study shows that these measures, in addition to enhancing nurses' well-being, could increase their resilience and motivation to keep on investing their energy in the things they value, among them, their work. In the long term, we believe that reinforcing the personal and job resources of nursing teams would have a strong impact on retaining these professionals within the healthcare organization, as well as on the quality of the service delivered to users. Nevertheless, it is necessary to analyze these relationships in further research.

### **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

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Ethical approval: All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent: Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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