

Co-Creating Customer Value in Real-Estate Sales: The role of Burnout, Work–Family Conflict, and Customer Orientation

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Escola de Economia e Gestão

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DIREITOS DE AUTOR E CONDIÇÕES DE UTILIZAÇÃO DO TRABALHO POR TERCEIROS

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To "her", "you", the one, unique in every way. You gave me life, the life I needed to accomplish this, and I know I will accomplish more with you by my side. This thesis is also yours...

STATEMENT OF INTREGITY

I hereby declare that I have acted with integrity in the preparation of this dissertation. I confirm that throughout the work leading to its completion, I did not engage in plagiarism or any form of result falsification.

Furthermore, I declare that I have fully acknowledged the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Minho.

RESUMO

"Co-criação de Valor com o Cliente no setor imobiliário: O papel do Burnout, do Conflito Trabalho–Família e da Orientação para o Cliente

O estudo atual baseia-se na teoria da cocriação de valor, e desenvolve um modelo que explora como a cocriação de valor pode ser afetada conjuntamente pelo Burnout, Conflito Trabalho-Família (CTF) e Orientação para o Cliente, na literatura sobre vendas. Assim, este estudo tem como objetivo explorar a ligação entre a Cocriação de Valor, o CTF e Burnout nos vendedores do setor imobiliário, esclarecendo como tanto o CTF, quanto o Burnout podem impactar negativamente o processo de cocriação de valor.

É amplamente aceito que os vendedores estão constantemente sob forte pressão devido ao desempenho de funções cada vez mais exigentes, tanto no local de trabalho como na esfera pessoal. Estes dois mundos colidem, tendo implicações para o bem-estar e compromisso profissional. Uma carreira de sucesso em vendas depende de interações pessoais em que as atividades relacionadas com a venda representam o principal elo entre a empresa e os seus clientes. No decorrer de todo este processo, é exigido ao vendedor que crie valor.

No contexto da função vendas, a cocriação de valor tornou-se um elemento crítico para que as estratégias de vendas sejam bem-sucedidas. A cocriação de valor não é apenas central para impulsionar o crescimento empresarial, mas é crucial para estabelecer relações de longo prazo entre as empresas e os clientes. No entanto, embora a importância da cocriação de valor seja amplamente reconhecida na literatura de vendas, pouca atenção tem sido dada ao modo como esta pode ser afetada pelas pressões psicológicas e emocionais que os profissionais de vendas enfrentam no desempenho das suas funções. Em particular, o impacto do CTF e do Burnout sobre a capacidade dos vendedores se envolverem eficazmente no processo de cocriação de valor, permanece ainda pouco explorado.

Este estudo adota uma abordagem positivista, utilizando um desenho de pesquisa quantitativo. Foi realizado um inquérito autoadministrado com 131 profissionais de vendas no setor imobiliário para avaliar a influência do CTF, do Burnout e da Orientação para o Cliente na Cocriação de Valor.

Os resultados indicam que o CTF (mais que o conflito na direção família-trabalho) e o Burnout são importantes inibidores da capacidade dos vendedores de cocriar valor com os clientes. Adicionalmente, os resultados mostram que a Orientação para o Cliente medeia significativamente a ligação entre Burnout e Cocriação de Valor. Um forte foco nas necessidades dos clientes ajuda a mitigar o impacto negativo do Burnout ao promover comportamentos orientados para aquele, permitindo a cocriação de valor mesmo em situações de Burnout.

Este estudo contribui para a literatura sobre vendas e cocriação de valor ao integrar a teoria da cocriação de valor com insights sobre os desafios psicológicos e emocionais enfrentados pelos

profissionais de vendas, especificamente no setor imobiliário. Neste sentido, os resultados permitem uma melhor compreensão de como o CTF e o Burnout no trabalho influenciam conjuntamente os processos de cocriação de valor, preenchendo uma lacuna de estudos anteriores.

Uma contribuição-chave reside em demonstrar os impactos negativos do CTF e do Burnout na cocriação de valor, ao mesmo tempo que identifica o papel mediador da Orientação para o Cliente. Os resultados revelam que as organizações podem mitigar os efeitos adversos do burnout por meio de estratégias que priorizem comportamentos voltados para o cliente, oferecendo pistas para melhorar a cocriação de valor, mesmo face às pressões enfrentadas pelos vendedores.

Além disso, o estudo destaca a necessidade de uma perspetiva equilibrada, sublinhando a assimetria entre o CTF e o Conflito Família-Trabalho, enfatizando a influência predominante das exigências do ambiente de trabalho no bem-estar e desempenho profissional.

Ao relacionar o bem-estar psicológico às práticas centradas no cliente, este estudo não apenas contribui com insights teóricos, mas também oferece recomendações práticas para organizações que procuram promover resiliência e eficácia em equipas de vendas sob pressão.

Palavras-chave: Cocriação de valor; Vendedor; Conflito Trabalho-Família; Burnout; Orientação para o Cliente;

ABSTRACT

"Co-Creating Customer Value in Real-Estate Sales: The role of Burnout, Work–Family Conflict, and Customer Orientation"

This study uses value co-creation theory to explore how Job Burnout, Work-Family Conflict (WFC), and Customer Orientation impact value co-creation in the sales literature, particularly in the real estate sector. Our main objective is to demonstrate the negative effects of WFC and Burnout on value co-creation.

Salespersons often experience significant pressure due to the demanding nature of their roles in both the workplace and their personal lives. These two areas frequently intersect, greatly impacting salesperson's well-being and commitment to their jobs. A successful career in sales hinges on personal interactions, where the activities involved in selling serve as the primary connection between the company and its customers. Throughout this process, salespeople must focus on creating value.

Value co-creation has become a critical component of successful sales strategies in the sales profession. It is essential for driving business growth and establishing long-term relationships between companies and customers. While value co-creation is widely recognised in sales literature, there has been limited focus on how it may be influenced by the psychological and emotional pressures that sales professionals experience. Specifically, the effects of WFC and Job Burnout on salespeople's ability to engage in value co-creation effectively remain underexplored.

This study employs a positivist approach utilising a quantitative research design. A self-administered survey was conducted with 131 real estate salespersons to evaluate the influence of WFC, Burnout, and Customer Orientation on their Value Co-Creation.

The results indicate that WFC, which is greater than Family-Work Conflict (FWC), along with Job Burnout, can hinder salespersons' ability to effectively co-create value with customers. However, these findings also emphasize the positive role of Customer Orientation as a mediator between Job Burnout and Value Co-Creation. By placing a strong emphasis on understanding and addressing customer needs, organisations can help mitigate the negative effects of burnout. This approach promotes customer-focused behaviours and fosters an environment where value co-creation can thrive, even in the face of challenges like burnout.

This study makes a significant contribution to the sales and value co-creation literature by integrating value co-creation theory with insights into the psychological and emotional challenges faced by sales professionals, specifically in the real estate sector. It advances the understanding of how WFC and Job Burnout jointly influence value co-creation processes, addressing a gap in prior research that has largely overlooked these factors.

A key contribution lies in demonstrating the negative impacts of WFC and Burnout on value co-creation while simultaneously identifying the mediating role of Customer Orientation. The findings reveal that

organisations can mitigate the adverse effects of burnout through strategies that prioritize customer-focused behaviours, offering practical pathways for enhancing value co-creation despite the pressure salespeople face.

Moreover, the study underscores the need for a balanced perspective by highlighting the asymmetry between WFC and FWC, emphasizing the dominant influence of workplace demands on professional well-being and performance.

By bridging psychological well-being with customer-centric practices, this research not only contributes theoretical insights but also offers actionable recommendations for organisations aiming to foster resilience and effectiveness in sales teams under pressure.

Keywords: Value co-creation; Salesperson; Work-Family Conflict; Burnout; Customer Orientation;

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ABREVIATIONS

B2B – Business to Business

B2C - Business to Consumer

CDERP - Customer-Directed Extra-role Performance

CPI – Customer Purchase Intentions

D-W – Durbin Watson

EI – Emotional Intelligence

FCO – Functional Customer Orientation

FFM - Five-Facto Model

FIW – Family Interference Work

FWC – Family-Work Conflict

GDL – Goods-Dominant Logic

IRP – In-Role Performance

JB – Job Burnout

MBI – Maslach Burnout Inventory

RCO – Relational Customer Orientation

SDL – Service-Dominant Logic

SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

VBS – Value Based Selling

VCC – Value Co-Creation

WFB – Work-Family Balance

WFC – Work-Family Conflict

WFE – Work-Family Enrichment

WIF – Work Interference in Family

To my son Duarte, my endless source of inspiration, energy and motivation...

Theoretical Background

I.

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter briefly presents the work developed and the novelty brought by the empirical study. We will address the main objectives to be achieved, the research gaps and expected contributions, the general methodology and, lastly, the research objectives. Finally, the structure of the thesis is presented.

1.1. Research Topic: Presentation and justification

The increasing complexities of today's sales environment require a sophisticated understanding of both intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics that underpin successful value co-creation. Sales have moved beyond the traditional paradigm of persuasion, developing into a relational, network-based process where value is co-created through adaptive interactions with diverse stakeholders. At the core of this shift is the salesperson, whose ability to build trust, demonstrate agility, and show empathy sustains organisational competitiveness in volatile markets (Itani et al., 2022, p.500).

Across sales and services markets, firms increasingly compete on the quality of interaction rather than on products alone: value is co-created with customers through dialogue, resource integration, and joint problem solving. This perspective — core to contemporary marketing — describes selling as a market-facing, relational capability that turns customer understanding and collaboration into performance (loyalty, price realization, enduring relationships). Recent work reinforces that customer-facing behaviours (e.g., customer orientation, value-based selling) are the key mechanisms of value and competitive advantage in sales organisations (Kassemeier et al., 2022; Yi and Amenuvor, 2022).

Salespeople aiming to reach their targets should concentrate on creating value for their customers. Although the importance of understanding customer needs and the product in sales is widely recognised, less is known about how salespeople transition from focusing solely on the product to adopting a relational approach, as well as their role as network builders. This shift makes the salesperson more of a relationship manager responsible for delivering value customised to each customer's specific needs (Marcos-Cuevas et al., 2016).

Although foundational literature stresses the importance of product knowledge and customer focus, recent studies and models reveal a vital gap: how personal stressors like work-family conflict (WFC) and burnout affect key relational skills needed for value co-creation. WFC is a major trigger for emotional exhaustion and disengagement in demanding sales roles. Burnout, characterized by chronic emotional depletion, depersonalization, and loss of accomplishment (Demerouti, 2024), further undermines network-building and diminishes the capacity to innovate solutions in real time (Phan, 2019).

Studies leveraging identity theory (Gong et al., 2023; Wang and Wen, 2022) have revealed how WFC triggers status anxiety, shifts consumption behaviours, and affects long-term psychosocial health. Consequently, salespeople contend with irregular hours, emotional labour, and multi-actor

coordination—factors that increase work–family conflict (WFC/FWC) and burnout (Lei et al., 2023; Sousa, 2025). While WFC/FWC scales are reliable across various contexts, marketing research still underexplores how these stress processes lead to specific behaviours that add value during customer interactions. This gap is strategically significant: if stress diminishes customer-focused behaviours, it can quietly undermine a firm's capacity to co-create value, even with robust offerings and systems (Ugwu & Idemudia, 2024).

Moreover, recent theoretical advancements have expanded the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) framework into the dynamic JD-R 3.0 model, revealing complex, nonlinear relationships between work demands, personal resources, stress, and productivity (Li, et al., 2025) . In sales, these pressures manifest not only as transactional challenges but as ongoing demands to nurture relationships across digital and in-person platforms. Consequently, salespeople contend with irregular hours, emotional labour, and multi-party coordination—factors that increase work–family conflict (WFC/FWC) and burnout (Amin et al., 2024; Kim, et al., 2025).

Despite these advances, there is a lack of comprehensive research exploring how WFC and burnout together affect the salesperson's key roles as a network builder, relationship manager, and value orchestrator (Terblanche & Babin, 2024). Most current studies focus on job stress or examine customer orientation in isolation, failing to consider the dynamic interaction between psychological burdens, relational strategies, and modern market demands (Hafstad et al., 2025).

Moreover, the literature has scarcely interrogated how personal and family-related stressors erode network-building and value co-creation, nor explored the mediating role of customer orientation in this dynamic. Recent social shifts—such as hybrid work models, remote client interactions, and rapid technological adoption in sales—heighten the urgency of this research (Oliveira et al., 2025).

Most current sales research primarily focuses on skills, incentives, and digital tools like customer-oriented and value-based selling, as well as sales digitization. In contrast, it pays less attention to salesperson stress and well-being as factors influencing market results. Recent reviews and studies highlight the emphasis on sales capabilities and digital transformation (Wengler et al., 2021; Mattila et al., 2021; Cioppi and Buratti, 2023; Kassemeier et al., 2022), while also calling for more focus on employee well-being and presenting emerging evidence that stress can harm frontline effectiveness (Good et al., 2024; Terblanche & Babin, 2024; Winter et al., 2024).

This thesis directly addresses these gaps, proposing a multidimensional investigation into:

- The bidirectional effects of work-to-family and family-to-work conflict on salespersons' ability to co-create and sustain customer-centric value, leveraging large-scale empirical analysis grounded in foundational theoretical frameworks;

- The sequential process of burnout — including emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished accomplishment — in shaping relational effectiveness and value co-creation;

- The mediating role of customer orientation, not merely as a behavioural trait but as a dynamic resource that can buffer psychological distress and enable sustained innovation in turbulent sales environments.

We study Portuguese real estate sales, a setting where transactions are interaction-intensive, high-stakes, and relational over long cycles. By treating WFC/FWC and burnout as strategic, internal antecedents that influence the enactment of customer-oriented behaviours, we aim to examine how work-family conflict (WFC) and burnout can negatively affect a salesperson's ability to co-create value with the customer by reducing their skills as a network builder and relationship manager.

By doing so, we contribute to research on WFC, value co-creation in sales, and burnout in three key ways:

First, according to Itani et al. (2022), most studies mainly focus on the factors affecting a salesperson's ability to generate value, learned behaviours and managerial influences. However, there is a notable scarcity of research on how personal factors such as work-family conflict (WFC) and burnout impact this ability. This oversight is surprising given the substantial impact of personal and family-related issues on an individual's life and their potential implications for sales, a high-pressure and demanding profession.

Second, individuals are increasingly exposed to a 24/7 economy where the ideal worker arrives first, leaves last, and has no emotional ties outside the workplace (Hoobler, Hu, & Wilson, 2010). As a result, salespersons are increasingly vulnerable to role conflicts due to balancing work and family responsibilities (Bande et al., 2019; Boles, Wood, & Johnson, 2003; Kemp, Borders, and Ricks, 2012). On the other hand, burnout is inevitably a result of frequent and intense client interactions (Castanheira & Chambel, 2010). It may be exacerbated when the salesperson perceives a conflict between work and family. Balancing the delicate compatibility between work and family has proven challenging in today's professional environment. This balance can impact the work quality, the nature of the work-family relationship, and individuals' psychological well-being (Fields, 2002). This research provides new

insights into the issue of work-family conflict in high-pressure professions such as sales and its impact on job burnout.

Third, recent research indicates that value co-creation occurs within favourable social-exchange conditions such as dialogue, access, reciprocity, and transparency. It also shows that salespeople are key actors in activating these conditions during sales interactions (e.g., Delpechitre et al., 2018). Evidence includes studies on B2B platforms and supplier–retailer relationships, meta-analyses linking interaction with value co-creation, and sales research demonstrating how customer-oriented salespeople generate and capture value (Kassemeier et al., 2022). While the literature thoroughly describes how salespeople influence customers' willingness to participate in value-creation (Delpechitre et al., 2018), less focus is placed on their role in creating, maintaining, and appropriating value in buyer and seller relationships (Haas et al., 2012).

There is a notable lack of research on how individual-level variables influence a salesperson's capacity to co-create value with customers in real estate (Alnakhli et al., 2021). This gap is heightened when considering how the work-family relationship impacts burnout, which can significantly reduce a salesperson's ability to address customers' specific needs. Consequently, further research is essential to explore the role of socio-psychological factors in a salesperson's effectiveness in a relationship that heavily relies on prioritizing customer needs (Inyang et al., 2024; Blocker et al., 2012). In summary, our work extends the understanding of the value co-creation concept at the salesperson level, emphasising its importance in attracting customers (Fan & Luo, 2020).

1.2. Research objectives

Given the bidirectional nature of conflict, we address both work-to-family conflict (WFC) and family-to-work conflict (FWC) and its impact on Value Co-Creation.

Value Co-Creation has gained significant attention in academic literature, with multiple studies demonstrating its strong influence on firms' Competitive Advantage and Salesperson Performance (Alnakhli et al., 2021). In sales settings, successful social interactions require salespeople to leverage their interpersonal and emotional skills to work jointly with customers in creating value. Nonetheless, the role of social interactions and salespersons' emotional willingness to co-create value has been underexplored in selling contexts (Johnson et al., 2021).

In personal selling, burnout has been widely examined in recent years. Recent studies indicate that a strong managerial sales orientation — operationalized through behaviour-/outcome-based control and intensive activity oversight — is associated with higher role stress and strain for salespeople, especially in technology-mediated selling (Ahmad et al., 2022; Childs et al., 2024; Cho and Nam, 2024; Shepherd et al., 2011).

To our knowledge, no research has examined Burnout as a direct or mediating variable through Customer Orientation in the context of Value Co-Creation. Therefore, it is essential to explore this topic further, not only from a marketing perspective but also from a management viewpoint. Gaining insight into what drives salespeople to interact with customers and jointly create value is vital. The primary aims of this study are therefore:

1) Estimate the effects of WFC and FWC among salespersons Value Co-Creation in the real estate sector.

2) Assess the effect of Job Burnout on salespersons Value Co-Creation in the real estate sector.

3) Assess whether customer orientation serves as the immediate behavioural pathway connecting burnout to value co-creation within the real estate sector.

1.3. Methodological Approach

Based on the research goals mentioned earlier, we will now outline the methodology that we believe is most suitable for achieving this study's objectives. Our research adopts a positivist approach, using quantitative methods to identify key aspects of Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC), Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC), and Job Burnout. Additionally, we aim to evaluate how these aspects influence Value Co-Creation in Sales. Moreover, our model thoroughly investigates the role of Job Burnout and the mediating effect of Customer Orientation on the relationship between the former and Value Co-Creation.

The quantitative phase of the study will thoroughly involve hypothesis testing using statistical methods to evaluate the relationships depicted in the conceptual model effectively.

The data collection process involved two stages. Initially, a draft of the questionnaire was developed based on existing literature and then reviewed by nine experts for modifications. Revisions were made

based on their feedback. Subsequently, the final version of the questionnaire was administered. The sample includes 131 Portuguese real estate salespersons.

1.4. Expected Contributions

This research's main contribution is advancing a behavioural perspective on value co-creation: it models salesperson strain as an upstream factor that influences how customer orientation is enacted. This clarifies when sales organisations can effectively co-create value with customers and when strain might hinder this process. It connects internal psychological states to market-facing capabilities and introduces a latent-variable approach to the sales co-creation literature.

Therefore, this study delivers vital contributions to academic knowledge and industry practice as it provides actionable insights for sales management, emphasizing not only the need to mitigate burnout and WFC but to cultivate network-building and customer orientation capacities through responsive policy and targeted interventions. Its findings challenge organisations to reconceptualize the nature of value creation by moving from isolated skillsets to holistic models that integrate personal well-being, social capital, and adaptive leadership.

This study seeks to add to the existing marketing theory and practice in personal selling in two key ways:

Firstly, the study aims to enhance understanding of Value Co-Creation by pinpointing its key components. This knowledge will help real estate sales managers recognise burnout episodes within their teams and adopt best practices to reduce the potential effects of WFC and FWC.

Secondly, the study explores the relationship between WFC/FWC, Burnout, and Value Creation to measure and develop the influence of WFC/FWC and Burnout on the Value Creation of Real Estate salespersons. This approach will help sales managers evaluate and address managerial responses to particular cases.

The research also aims to enhance understanding of Value Co-Creation in the sales context, emphasising how various dimensions, such as WFC and FWC, affect Job Burnout and, in turn, influence Value Co-Creation. The study additionally investigates the mediating role of Customer Orientation in connecting Burnout and Value Co-Creation.

Additionally, the study identifies best practices for managing Job Burnout among salespeople, aiming to have practical value for real estate salespeople and brokers. It also provides insights into how Customer Orientation can enhance Value Co-Creation and, in general, seeks to contribute to advancing the theory of individual aspects of Value Co-Creation in the context of personal selling.

1.5. Thesis Structure

The first chapter begins with an introduction to the research topic, its presentation, and relevance. The research goals or objectives follow it. The methodological approach will also be discussed.

Chapter 2 offers a detailed review of the relevant literature. It begins with an overview of the key concepts under study and examines the current research landscape on WFC/FWC and Burnout. Next, the chapter explores the idea of Value Co-Creation and its significance within the real estate sector. Lastly, the concept of Customer Orientation is introduced. The chapter concludes with the presentation of the Research Hypothesis following each literature review of the respective concepts.

Chapter 3 presents the Conceptual Model and the summary of the Research Hypotheses. This chapter presents a model that provides a conceptual foundation for examining the components of work-family conflict (WFC), family-work conflict (FWC), burnout, and customer orientation, and how these factors are linked to the value co-creation of real estate salespeople in Portugal.

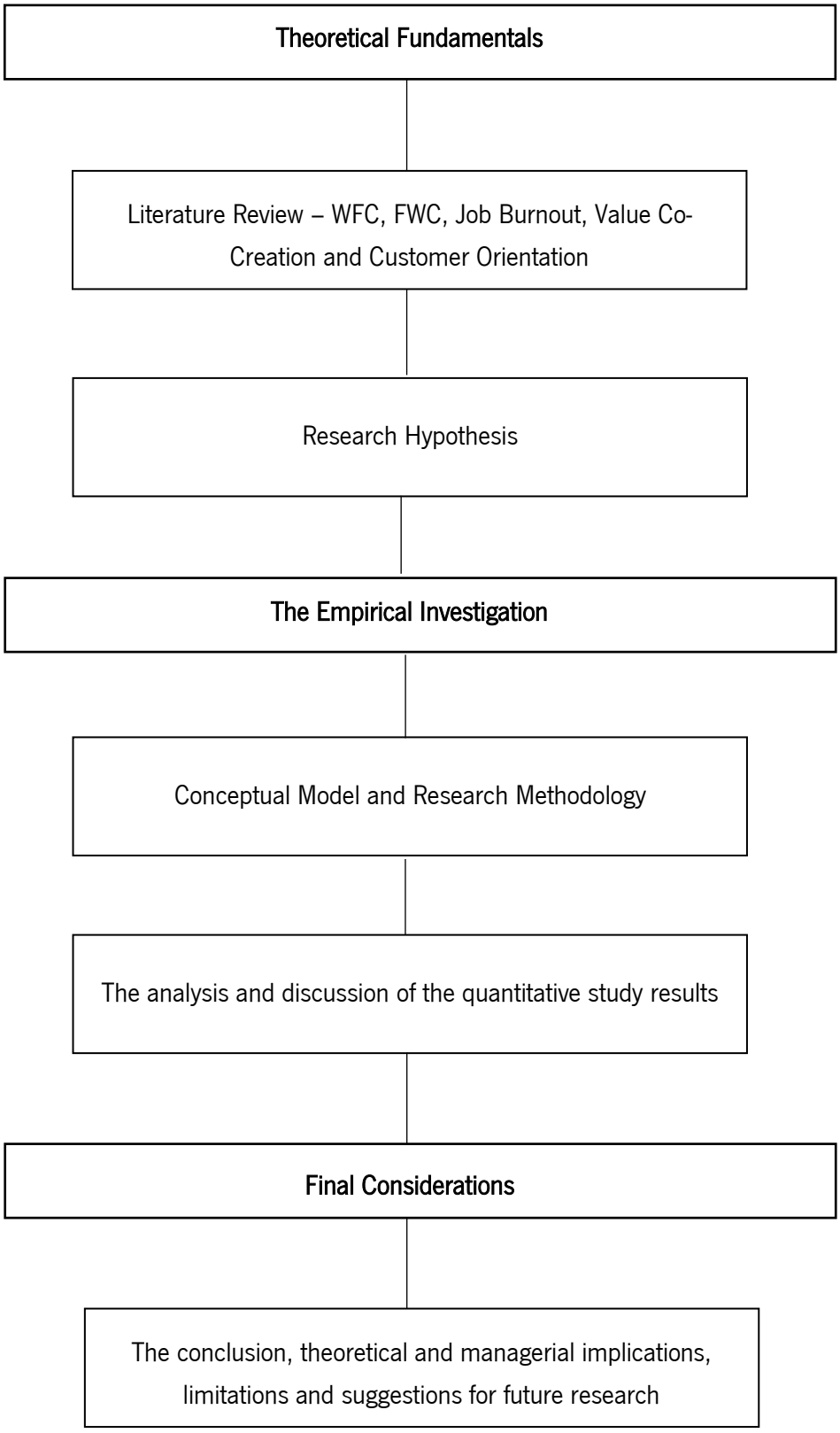
Chapter 4 outlines the research context, methodological choices, and clarifies the research strategy and sampling procedures. It describes the phases and steps taken during the empirical investigation.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the investigation regarding the quantitative analysis conducted as part of this study, utilising the computer software SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) for data organisation and analysis.

In chapter 6, an analysis of the study and the overall conclusions of the results will be presented and interpreted.

Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the main conclusions of this study, along with its contributions to both theory and practice. The limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are also included.

Figure 1 - Thesis Structure



Source: Own Elaboration

II.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, we will provide a comprehensive review of the literature relevant to the field of Personal Sales, with a particular focus on Work-Family Conflict (WFC), Family-Work Conflict (FWC), Job Burnout, Customer Orientation, and Value Co-Creation. We will start with an overview of the relevant constructs and then analyse their contemporary implications for health and performance. Next, we will explore the concepts of Job Burnout and Customer Orientation in detail, examining their key components. Additionally, we will delve into the concept of Value Co-Creation and how it is impacted by the identified conflicts and orientations in sales environments. Finally, we'll conclude the chapter with a theoretical exploration of the Real Estate Sector, providing a context for understanding the practical implications of these concepts.

2.1. Work-Family Conflict and Family Work Conflict in Sales

The work-family relationship has received increased attention in sales as a core social-psychological risk in today's working environment (Bande et al., 2019). This type of occurrence will have both individual and organisational repercussions. It will negatively impact individuals' well-being, leading to higher costs and decreased organisational competitiveness (Carballo-Penela, et al., 2018).

Work-family conflict refers to the perceived incompatibility or tension that arises when the demands and responsibilities of an individual's work-life interfere with their family and personal life, or vice versa (Miao and Wang, 2017). The relationship between work and family is described as a form of inter-role conflict – opposing role pressures -, in which the pressures from both the work and family roles are mutually incompatible in some respect (Byron, 2005; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; Kopelman, Greenhaus, and Connolly, 1983; Taylor, Huml, and Dixon, 2019). This means that job expectations or responsibilities may conflict with family expectations or responsibilities (Darrat et al., 2010; Tabassum et al., 2017). The reverse relationship also exists (i.e. family-to-work conflict, FWC).

The seminal work of Greenhaus and Beutell, (1985) highlighted three types of inter-role conflict:

a) Time-Based Conflict: Spending much time on one role can make it hard to participate in another. Work dedication and time consumption can make it tough to devote time to personal causes, especially family-related ones.

b) Strain-Based Conflict: The concept of interdomain permeability suggests that stress from one aspect of life (e.g. work) can negatively impact other factors (e.g. family) (Hoobler et al., 2010; Tabassum et al., 2017). This stress can manifest in various symptoms such as tension, anxiety, depression, fatigue, and irritability, making it difficult to meet the demands of other dimensions.

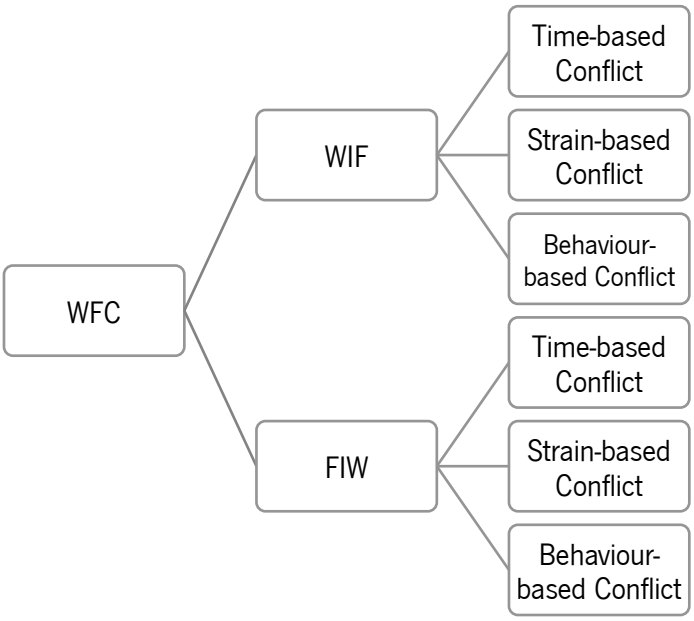
c) Behaviour-Based Conflict: By participating in different social environments, such as work and family, individuals are expected to adapt their behaviour to different demanding situations. If people cannot adjust their behaviour to meet these different expectations, they will likely experience conflict between their roles.

Recently, Hoobler et al. (2010) added a fourth source of conflict, Cognitive-Based Conflict, where an individual, even when not performing the work role, is mentally absent from their family role or distracted by work-related issues.

One important shortcoming in the work-family literature is that the directionality of the conflict is more focused on work's interference with family life than the reverse (Carlson, et al., 2000). However, researchers acknowledge the bilateral nature of the conflict, referring to it as a bidirectional relationship (Byron, 2005). This means that work interferes with family (WFC) and family interferes with work (FWC).

This bidirectionality entails six dimensions that include three distinct sources of conflict (Byron, 2005; Carlson et al., 2000; Westring and Ryan, 2011). Figure 2 illustrates these six dimensions of the construct, and its bi-directionality:

Figure 2 - The six dimensions of the WFC Construct



Source: Adapted from Carlson et al. (2000).

These two life domains conflict and make it harder for the individual to participate in these two dimensions because each person possesses finite resources employed in one role at the expense of the other. This leads to adverse outcomes for the individual (e.g. burnout) because they cannot reconcile different life demands. Therefore, work and family are viewed as two near-independent and near-incompatible domains originating in intra-and inter-role conflict due to incompatible demands between different life demands.

The negative interference of work responsibilities in family life is felt by the distress in fulfilling marital roles and childcare duties, thus affecting family and personal life. In the same line of thought, family

responsibilities (e.g., new-born child and parenthood) may interfere with the job demands of working long hours or work travelling, which negatively affects career development (Beigi, et al., 2019).

The work conducted by Beigi et al. (2019), is of utmost importance to the work-nonwork research (where WFC is included) because it sets conceptual boundaries and clarifies the different terminologies used by academics in various research fields. Their work allowed classifying work-nonwork terminologies into three relevant categories as a way of helping researchers avoid repetitive conceptualizations ("reducing conceptual messiness"). In Table 1 we reproduce the primary outcome of their work:

Table 1 - Work-Nonwork Interface Terminologies

Categories	Immature	Intermediate	Mature
Work-Nonwork Interface Terminologies	Work-social system adaptation	Work-family accommodation	Work-family boundary
	Work-social system fit	Work-family balance	Work-family conflict
	Work-family articulation	Work-family border	Work-family enrichment
	Work-family combination	Work-family congruence	Work-family facilitation
	Work-family harmony	Work-family compensation	Work-family spillover (positive)
	Work-family interaction	Work-family enhancement	Work-home interaction
	Work-family interface	Work-family expansion	
	Work-family intersection	Work-family integration	
	Work-family linkage	Work-family fit	
	Work-family management	Work-family resource drain	
	Work-leisure compensation	Work-family segmentation	
	Work-leisure segmentation	Work-family spillover (negative)	
	Work-leisure spillover	Work-home conflict	
	Work-home segmentation	Work–nonwork conflict	
	Work-life balance	Work/nonwork expansion	
	Work-life harmony	Work-nonwork enhancement	
	Work-nonwork compensation	Work-nonwork spillover (positive)	
	Work/nonwork segmentation	Work-nonwork integration	
	Work-nonwork spillover (negative)	Work-home enrichment	
	Work/nonwork interface	Work-nonwork enhancement	
	Work–home interface		
	Work nonwork intersection		

Source: (Adapted from Beigi et al.,(2019, p.7)

According to Beigi et al. (2019, p. 5), the WFC is placed into the "mature" category of terminologies, which are *"mature work-nonwork interface terminologies [that] encompass well-developed constructs that have been studied over time with increasing precision by a variety of scholars, resulting in clear definitions and operationalized measures used in a larger body of empirical research."*

The WFC model is rooted in role theory (Rushing, 1965), developed by scholars from various research fields. This theory states that individuals perform several roles in life simultaneously, such as being a father and a worker. Role Theory includes two main research streams with relevant and extended research: conflict and enrichment/enhancement. The main attribute of these two streams of research is resources and their scarcity.

In the opposite direction of WFC is the Work-Family Enrichment research stream (WFE), which advocates that those resources are not scarce, and that individuals' roles are not necessarily antagonistic but interactive and dynamic. The central tenet is that individuals benefit from the commitment to multiple life roles, which may lead to positive individual outcomes. Thus, the empirical evidence shows lower stress levels and increased life satisfaction levels when individuals are involved in different life domains (Schenewark and Dixon, 2012).

The rationale behind the Expansionist perspective and WFE is that the commitment to multiple roles generates a positive spillover of feelings and emotions between different life domains. Hence, the WFE theory highlights the buffer effect that, for instance, family life may have on work demands or disappointments - conversely, having a fulfilling private life spills positively into the work domain. For example, having children increases individuals' ability to be more patient and organised at work; at the same time, participation in several life roles also enhances our social network and sources of social support (Carlson, et al., 2006). In addition, a higher income can positively improve the family's purchasing power and quality of life in general (Wadsworth and Owens, 2007).

In short, WFE augments individual resources, leading to overall well-being and motivational outcomes (Mauno et al., 2015). Despite the evidence, the expansionist research stream has little development compared with the role conflict perspective (Warner and Hausdorf, 2009).

Sales professionals often face heavy stress due to the demanding nature of their interactions with a range of individuals both inside the organisation, such as colleagues, and outside of it, including customers and suppliers. Moreover, we firmly believe that sales job characteristics such as long work hours and nonstandard work schedules (working on weekends) will affect family domains, resulting in

fatigue and stress (Asiedu et al., 2018). We expect the interface between work and family to be characterized more by role conflict than role enhancement.

Furthermore, the interference of work in the family domain (WFC) is believed to be frequent among Salespersons, as previously stated by several researchers (Chelariu and Stump, 2011; Miao and Wang, 2017).

Several studies have shown that conflict originating from Work in the Family (WFC) is higher than in the opposite direction (FWC) (Colombo and Ghislieri, 2008; Miao and Wang, 2017; Netemeyer, Maxham, and Pullig, 2005). In others, the opposite phenomenon happened (Asiedu et al., 2018). Different cultures have varying ways of responding to conflict and the reasons behind the conflict. For example, in certain cultures, employees are often rewarded with promotions or salary increases based on their performance. However, individuals with family responsibilities may not seek additional duties due to their daily constraints (Asiedu et al., 2018). Some studies have emphasized the importance of psychological detachment from work and finding meaning in life for overall well-being (Garrosa-Hernández et al., 2013).

Our study will focus on both directions of conflict for two main reasons: 1) they are linked to different causes and outcomes, and 2) it will help us understand more about how it affects a real estate salesperson's Value Co-Creation, which is one of the primary purposes of this study.

2.1.1. Work-to-family conflict: Main Antecedents and Outcomes

2.1.1.1. Antecedents

Several studies have addressed the WFC's antecedents and its negative consequences, both for individuals' health and performance and for organisation costs in terms of higher levels of employee turnover and absenteeism.

Seminal authors and essential contributors to the WFC field, such as Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) highlight the following antecedents:

- Time-based conflicts: number of hours worked per week, inflexibility of the work schedule, parental responsibilities and a working spouse;

- Strain-based conflicts: role ambiguity, low levels of leader support and interaction, organisational changes, participation in boundary-spanning activities;

The long working hours endured by salespersons, the high commitment to solving customer's complaints and requests, and the setting of sales commissions or goals that must be attained by each seller monthly may interfere with the harmony of family life (Gallie and Russell, 2009; Miao and Wang, 2017).

Several meta-analysis research studies on WFC have examined individual and organisational predictors such as work and family role stressors, dispositional variables, workplace flexibility, supervisor and organisational support, and dependent care support (Allen et al., 2015). However, work characteristics, such as job type, organisational levels (managerial vs. non-managerial), and educational degrees (Ahmad, 2008), are the main contributors to predicting WFC.

According to Gallie and Russell (2009), there are four aspects to take into account when analysing employee stress inducers:

- Working long hours: the culture of working long hours profoundly impacts family interaction, as it causes physical exhaustion and deprives the individual of participating in family activities. One important aspect of WFC experienced by employees relates to working long hours which translates into the amount of time and commitment devoted to one's work (Work or family).;
- Work intensity or workload: relates to the level of supervisory control and the demands to work intensively and rapidly. Nowadays, with organisations promoting tailored and more adjusted solutions to clients'/customers' needs, the level of effort when performing a job is more intense than before,
- Working conditions: related to a safe working environment that does not endanger an employee's health and that ensures the necessary material resources to complete the job tasks;
- Job insecurity relates to permanence within the organisation and a sense of justice regarding remuneration and other benefits. Increased feelings of job uncertainty and vulnerability are essential inducers of job stress and exhaustion.

According to Chelariu and Stump (2011), job insecurity is a potent inducer of role stress for the employee, which is "an important correlate of WFC and FWC". In their opinion, job insecurity leads to increased competition among colleagues, augmenting their feelings of job vulnerability. In addition,

individuals who perceive their workload as excessive and exceeding their limits, will experience negative outcomes such as fatigue and tension. These negative feelings will generate WFC (Ahmad, 2008).

Sales professionals are prone to high-stress levels from their extensive interactions with a network of organisational stakeholders, including customers and suppliers. This issue presents a significant concern for managers in the sales sector. A recent study focusing on sales professionals has revealed that information technologies, such as smartphones, also contribute to their workload, exacerbating conflicts between work and family/home life (Delpechitre et al., 2019). Technology facilitates round-the-clock availability for work, compelling employees to, for example, check emails during family vacations and leisure times or work from home during hours typically reserved for family, thereby intensifying work-family conflict (Harris, et al., 2015).

2.1.1.2. Outcomes

The studies about the consequences of WFC highlight its negative impact on organisational outcomes, such as higher employee turnover, stress levels, absenteeism, leave intentions, and counterproductive organisational behaviours (Chelariu and Stump, 2011; Miao and Wang, 2017).

In table number 2 we summarize the primary adverse outcomes derived from the literature on WFC in recent years:

Table 3 - Summary of the main negative outcomes derived from the literature on WFC

Interaction of Work and Family	Negative Outcomes	Source
Work-Family Conflict	Higher frequency of Job and Family distress	Warner and Hausdorf, (2009)
	Poor health	
	Decreased job and life satisfaction	Carlson et al., 2000; Eby et al., (2005); Warner and Hausdorf, (2009)
	Decreased Organisational Performance	Warner and Hausdorf, (2009)
	Low Morale	
	High Turnover rates	
	Decreased Job Satisfaction and Higher Leave Intentions	
	Job Stress	Netemeyer et al., (2005)
	Decreased Job Satisfaction and Interrole Conflict	Kopelman et al., (1983)
	Turnover Intentions, Care-Related Absences and Lower Organisational and Career Commitment	Eby et al., (2005)
	Job Stress, Negative Life Satisfaction, Turnover Intentions	Karatepe and Baddar, (2006)
	Low Job Satisfaction, High Turnover Intentions and High Work Stress	Zhang and Bowen, (2021)
	Unhealthy Eating Habits	Shukri et al., (2018)
	Depression Among Female Workers	Lee et al., (2022); (Weston et al., 2019)

Source: Author's elaboration

The research on WFC concluded that it has negative implications for employees and organisational performance. One particular study focused on WFC's outcomes on Customer Purchase Intentions (CPI), customer-directed extra-role performance (CDERP), and Employee In-Role Performance (IRP), both in B2B and B2C scenarios (Netemeyer et al., 2005). The study conducted by Netemeyer et al. (2005) explores WFC and its influence on employee performance and customer outcomes, establishing that WFC directly affects employee's extra-role performance. In addition, this study highlights that extra-role performance negatively affects Customer Purchase Intentions.

The present research targets customer service employees because previous research has shown that these employees are highly stressed and aim to achieve work and life balance (Netemeyer et al., 2005). In addition, this type of employee excels in their tasks to help customers and enhance the firm's image by publicizing its products and services to customers. Likewise, salespeople are the ones who interact

closely with the customer, thus better able to access their wants, needs, and expectations and to convey those customer needs and expectations to organisational managers and other marketing personnel. This is a major characteristic of a salesperson shared by service employees (Netemeyer et al., 2005).

The WFC has been widely researched and appointed as an antecedent of job burnout because of the incompatibility between work and family expectations (Chelariu and Stump, 2011). In addition, emotional exhaustion is strongly related to WFC due to resource depletion in the professional sphere, which is, in a way, incompatible with a healthy family environment. In addition, it has been linked to burnout in B2B sales contexts (Bande et al., 2015; Rutherford et al., 2011). Salespersons' jobs can lead to burnout due to the long work hours routine, non-traditional schedules, frequent travelling, and the lack of time-off strain.

When individuals experience work-family conflict (WFC) episodes, they feel stressed due to the interference between their work and family responsibilities. This situation leads to severe emotional imbalance and physical exhaustion. WFC is caused by overwork and the challenge of balancing physical and mental availability with family demands. Some studies, suggest that the causal relationship between WFC and Emotional Exhaustion may be explained by the depletion of personal resources (Hall et al., 2010; Wang and Ko, 2021). Conflicts often arise when role demands in one field (work or family) are challenging to achieve and have implications in the other field. This is followed by exhaustion of personal (e.g., emotional) resources with severe consequences in job performance. Thus, individuals are stripped of their resources, creating emotional exhaustion, which, in turn, interferes with the family's well-being and increases internal conflicts (Hall et al., 2010; Nicklin et al., 2022).

Several authors argue that the most prominent manifestation of job burnout is emotional exhaustion and work-family conflict, which have been found to have a strong positive correlation (Edmondson et al., 2019; Bande et al., 2015). This negative emotional state has a double-source effect leading to a feeling of failure in both work and family domains. If not adequately addressed, family conflicts may affect social interaction propensity, negatively affecting job burnout.

The WFC is also associated with the amount of time spent working (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985); hence, it is believed to be an antecedent of job burnout. The perception of work overload will increase the probability of work exhaustion, another major contributor to burnout (Tabassum et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2019).

Other studies on WFC, suggest that individuals experience negative emotions, fatigue, and tension when they realise their workload exceeds their resources and time (Ahmad, 2008; Pluut, Ilies, Curşeu, and

Liu, 2018). In addition, a study focusing on quantitative job demands found that the number of hours worked and the vast number of customers to manage in a salesperson's account are strongly related to burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, 2001).

Moreover, the study by Taylor et al. (2019), concluded that WFC directly affects Burnout, while the relationship between FWC and Burnout is not statistically confirmed. Notwithstanding, the work of several authors (Bande et al., 2015; Fields, 2002; Tabassum et al., 2017; Taylor et al., 2019) confirms that WFC is an antecedent of emotional exhaustion in the case of salespersons. The real estate sector shares this "modus operandi" where not only do salespersons have to work long hours to generate performance, but sales managers should instil higher levels of commitment to work harder and longer hours (Cole, 2003; Zhang and Bowen, 2021).

However, salespersons seem to have the "ability to bounce back" through the moderating effect of resiliency (Krush et al., 2013). This skill allows for self-regulation, which buffers job stressors and attenuates the relationship between WFC and Stress.

Authors such as Pluut et al. (2018) propose a dual-buffering model in which social support at work reduces the negative impact of workload on emotional exhaustion. Additionally, social support at home will reduce the effects of emotional exhaustion on work-family conflict.

To summarise, individuals who experience WFC are prone to feelings of severe emotional imbalance and physical exhaustion, making fulfilling family responsibilities difficult.

Real estate salespersons who experience work-family conflict (WFC) due to overcommitting to their jobs (e.g. spending countless hours on work sites, travelling, or engaging in work-related activities) will experience higher levels of job burnout. Therefore, we have formulated the following hypothesis:

H1: WFC is positively related to Job Burnout among real estate salespersons.

2.1.2. Family-to-work conflict: Main Antecedents and Outcomes

2.1.2.1. Antecedents

Family-to-work conflict (FWC) has drawn timid attention among scholars representing only a few studies (Anand et al., 2015).

According to Fu and Shaffer (2001), the family antecedents that interfere the most with the work domain include marital status, working spouse, parental demands, and hours spent on household work. These authors state that married individuals experience higher levels of FWC than single ones, as the latter have more flexibility in managing time and family commitments. In addition, parenting was found to conflict with work, with a particular focus on the number and age of children (Fu and Shaffer, 2001; Mansour and Tremblay, 2018).

Furthermore, FWC is more evident when the working spouse has less time to do housework in the couple (Fu and Shaffer, 2001; Kopelman et al., 1983).

Family characteristics, such as dependent care of elderly or disabled children/adults, represent inflexible domestic commitments that imply lesser availability for work responsibilities (Ahmad, 2008). The findings align with Carlson et al., (2000), who discovered that increased family involvement leads to higher FWC. These results contradict those of Byron (2005); thus, further research on FWC antecedents is needed. According to Byron (2005), the literature on FWC has used various methods to measure the number of children, resulting in different findings. Some authors used the number of children, others focused on the number of children at home, and some only considered the existence of children. In this study, we aim to expand the definition of family role responsibilities to include elderly care, moving beyond solely considering the number of children at home (Asiedu et al., 2018).

In this regard, Mansour and Tremblay, (2018) theorize how workplace best practices such as family-friendly practices (on-site childcare and information services), compressed workweeks, and part-time work may positively impact FWC mitigation. However, part-time work yielded contradictory results (Oishi et al., 2015), which concluded that part-time workers experience higher levels of FWC than full-time employees. FWC antecedents, such as hours spent on family, housework, childcare, or other nonwork-related activities, were found to be positively related to the FIW experienced by individuals (Byron, 2005).

Other research studies have expanded the investigation into the FWC domain. According to Michel, et al. (2011), the factors that lead to FWC include:

a) Family Role Stressors: Stressors within the family domain, such as:

- Family role conflict: Facing conflicting and opposing role pressures within the family;
- Family role ambiguity: Not having clear responsibilities within the family role;
- Family role overload: Feeling overwhelmed by family tasks and having limited time to complete them. This includes Balancing time spent with the family and other activities and meeting the demands of the parental role and responsibilities related to the individuals living at home;
- Age of Children.

b) Family Role Involvement:

- How connected you feel to your family role;
- How vital your family is to you.

c) Family Social Support:

- Types of support (like help, understanding, advice) you get from your family
- Types of support you get from your spouse

d) Family Characteristics:

- Whether your spouse works and how much involvement;
- The total family income;
- How well does your family work together and meets each other's needs.

Several authors have also addressed FWC and identified various factors, such as high family demands, lack of family support, and work inflexibility, as predictors of conflict. These factors have been widely studied in the work-family research field. These predictors have been explored by some of the most prominent authors and researchers that have been in the foundation of the FWC concept, including:

- Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) research is known for their work on work-family conflict and the role of work inflexibility as a predictor of FWC. They emphasized that when employees perceive their work environment as inflexible and incompatible with their family responsibilities, it can contribute to higher levels of family-to-work conflict.
- Netemeyer and colleagues (1996), renowned for creating the Work-Family Conflict Scale and the Family-Work Conflict Scale, also investigated the predictors of FWC in their research.

- Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1997) conducted extensive research on work-family conflict and identified various predictors of FWC, including high family demands, lack of family support, and work inflexibility. Their studies highlight the bidirectional nature of work-family conflict and its impact on employee well-being and job outcomes;
- Kossek and Ozeki(1998) highlighted the role of contextual factors, including family demands and support and work flexibility, in predicting FWC. Their work emphasizes the importance of organisational policies and practices in reducing work-family conflict and enhancing employee well-being;
- Carlson et al. (2006) researched work-family conflict and found that high family demands, such as caregiving responsibilities or family-related stressors, can lead to disputes between family and work roles. They also highlighted the importance of family support in mitigating the negative impact of FWC on employees.

Recent studies have suggested that factors such as high family responsibilities (such as having a large family, young children, and extensive household duties), unexpected family events (like illness or unplanned guests disrupting work schedules), and lack of spousal support in managing household tasks contribute significantly to Family-Work Conflict (FWC) (Erdamar and Demirel, 2014).

Support systems, organisational practices, and Work-Life Balance programs in Germany have been found to alleviate the effects of FWC on dual-earner individuals, mainly stemming from factors like high family responsibilities, role overload, and rigid working schedules (Yucel and Borgmann, 2022).

Another study (Rhee et al., 2020) revealed that Family-Work Conflict has a limited direct impact on job satisfaction among low-wage workers, indicating that the interference of family responsibilities with work duties does not significantly affect job satisfaction. Additionally, while FWC did not directly affect turnover intention, it did have a statistically significant indirect effect, suggesting that its impact on turnover intention is mediated by job satisfaction. The study also highlighted a differential impact between Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and FWC, with WFC showing a more substantial and direct influence on job satisfaction and turnover intention than FWC.

In addition, Bilodeau et al. (2020) emphasizes that Family-to-Work Conflict is significantly influenced by various family-related stressors, such as couple-related tensions, single-parent status, and child-related problems, with the latter affecting women more. Work-related stressors, including evening schedules, psychological and physical demands, and supervisor support, also contribute to higher FWC. Psychosocial resources, such as an internal locus of control and self-esteem, are associated with lower

FWC, especially among women. Moreover, the study finds that FWC has a significant direct impact on psychological distress for women, but not for men, indicating a gender difference.

The work-family balance (WFB) field is vast, and scholars have made significant strides in investigating different aspects of WFB. This has undoubtedly enhanced our understanding of the factors contributing to this conflict and its impact on individuals and organisations. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that there is still much to learn about the outcomes of work-family conflict on individuals. Moreover, determining the effectiveness of managerial best practices for specific cases, such as salespeople, remains a pressing and essential area for further research. This underscores the need for continued academic exploration in this field.

2.1.2.2. Outcomes

Previous research has identified several consequences of FIW, such as lower levels of performance, job and life satisfaction, high anxiety levels, and job stress (Anand et al., 2015). Additionally, women are particularly susceptible to Job Stress, increased Turnover Intentions, and diminished Family Satisfaction when experiencing conflicts between Family and Work domains (Karatepe and Baddar, 2006). Also, women reported more sleeping problems than men when performing the same job (Garrosa-Hernández et al., 2013).

The research indicates that personal traits can buffer the impact of stress from Family-Work Conflict (FWC). Specifically, individuals characterised by high agreeableness (Anand et al., 2015), those who prioritise work-life balance (Li, Wu, and Johnson, 2018) and those practising self-compassion (Nicklin, and Shockley, 2022) experience reduced stress levels in the face of FWC challenges. This suggests that personal attitudes and psychological characteristics are crucial in moderating stress responses to conflicting work and family demands.

However, managers must recognize that family and work roles can potentially conflict, affecting employees differently. It is argued that the intricacies of modern organisational life, such as competitive pressures and the need for new technical skills, could negatively impact family dynamics. Additionally, the impact of family-related demands on work-family conflict varies, suggesting that these challenges do not affect individuals similarly (Oishi et al., 2015). The same authors suggest that not all employees with family obligations will necessarily experience FWC.

Research conducted across Eastern countries, including India and Australia, has shown that the impact of Family-Work Conflict (FWC) on well-being varies. Family roles often contribute to conflict rather than serve as a support mechanism. Work-family conflict in these regions indicates a complex interplay between career and family life, with family responsibilities posing considerable challenges to personal well-being (Kalliath et al., 2017).

Van den Eynde et al., (2020) study examined how parental work-family conflict (WFC) influences children's behaviour. The study focuses on the mediating roles of parental well-being and parenting practices. It reveals that work interfering with family (WIF) and family interfering with work (FIW) negatively affect parental well-being, affecting children's behaviour. Specifically, FIW hurts parenting practices, indicating that the impact of family work more directly affects how parents interact with their children. The study underscores the importance of considering both direct and indirect pathways through which WFC affects children and emphasizes the critical role of parental well-being and effective parenting in mitigating these effects.

The research underscores the significant and positive influence of both WFC and FWC on organisational turnover intentions, demonstrating a detrimental impact on employee well-being (e.g., Moreira, 2022). Well-being is a partial mediator in the relationship between WFC and turnover intentions, highlighting the intricate dynamics between these factors. These insights advocate for addressing WFC and FWC in organisational settings to not only curb turnover intentions but also foster an environment that promotes the well-being of employees.

In their study, (Moreira, et al., 2023) found a detrimental impact of family-work conflict on task performance. Conversely, well-being significantly improved task performance and moderated the effect of family-work conflict. This suggests that enhancing employee well-being could mitigate the negative consequences of such conflict on performance outcomes.

Yucel and Borgmann (2022) suggested that FWC (work-family conflict) leads to mental health issues, reduced job performance, stress, fatigue, work absenteeism, and dissatisfaction. Consistent with these findings, a recent study by Lee et al. (2024) indicates that FWC may intensify the mental health impact of long working hours, especially among female workers. The link between long working hours and depressive symptoms was consistent in their study for male workers, regardless of FWC level. However, for female workers, this association was significant only among those experiencing high levels of FWC. Addressing FWC in appropriate ways could potentially help alleviate depressive symptoms associated with long working hours.

The literature on the influence of WFC on burnout is abundant; however, the relationship between FWC and burnout is quite scarce. Despite the scarcity, studies revealed inconsistent results. The FWC timidly predicted Burnout, while the WFC was relatively robust (Asiedu et al., 2018). Research indicates that family-work conflict influences job stress more than emotional exhaustion (Gholitabar et al., 2020). This distinction might stem from employees' efforts to maintain a positive professional image, given the critical role of job income in supporting family welfare. As such, FWC's effects may be perceived as less severe than those of WFC, highlighting the nuanced ways personal and professional spheres intersect (Asiedu et al., 2018).

Unlike WFC, Taylor et al. (2019) found that the connection between FWC and burnout was not statistically significant. Moreover, research by several authors (e.g., Chelariu and Stump,2011; Karatepe and Baddar, 2006; Netemeyer et al., 2005) suggests that FWC does not directly influence job stress. Notwithstanding, these results suggesting that FWC does not directly influence job stress, contrast with those of other researchers such as Erdamar and Demirel, (2014) indicating a lack of consensus on FWC's impact on occupational stress.

Reichl et al. (2014) observed that the correlation between nonwork-to-work conflict (a broader category encompassing various Work-Family Conflict concepts) and burnout is less pronounced than work-to-nonwork conflict. They placed particular emphasis on the Emotional Exhaustion aspect of burnout, suggesting that the directionality of conflict plays a significant role in its impact on employee well-being. According to Shukri et al. (2018), anxiety, depression and guilt were found to be stronger in individuals who experience FWC (rather than WFC), with a high impact on eating disorders.

Despite existing research, there remains uncertainty regarding how FWC affects crucial outcomes like job performance and emotional exhaustion, potentially due to the influence of unidentified moderating variables (Wang et al., 2021).

Understanding family-to-work conflict in the context of salespersons is crucial for both researchers and practitioners. It highlights individuals' unique challenges in these roles but also points towards potential interventions and policies that can help achieve a healthier work-life balance. Addressing FWC effectively can lead to more engaged, productive, and satisfied sales teams, which benefits both the employees and the organisation. We thus posit that Real Estate Salespersons encountering Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC) due to family obligations or activities are likely to exhibit increased levels of Job Burnout. Accordingly, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: FWC is positively related to Job Burnout among real estate salespersons.

2.2. Value Co-Creation in Sales

Rooted in the Service-Dominant Logic and the Resource Integration Theory, Value Co-Creation (VCC) is a concept that highlights the collaborative and information-exchanging process between organisations and customers in creating joint value (Assiouras, et al., 2019).

The creation of value is often linked to the customer's participation in the process of developing a product or service, as the extent literature on Value Co-Creation has been generous in criating a customer-centric approach to Value Co-Creation, meaning, that customers are always the co-creators of Value through Co-production (Friend, et al., 2020). This means that the customer plays a role in the value creation process (Jaakkola, et al., 2015; Szarucki and Menet, 2018) through their interaction with the salesperson who represents the company. Value creation is centred on the customer's value-in-use, and co-creation directly results from the interaction between firms and customers (Grönroos and Voima, 2013).

Hohenschwert (2012) suggests that a deep comprehension of how companies (Value Providers) and their customers interact is essential for recognizing the value co-creation process. Value co-creation is a concept where the company and its customers contribute to creating value in a product or service. The author explains that without understanding this interaction, the idea of value co-creation lacks meaning and cannot be identified or implemented effectively. In simpler terms, for value co-creation to be accurate and effective, both companies and customers must understand how they can work together to enhance the value of a product or service. Value co-creation is, therefore, perceived as the mutual value generated between the customer and the salesperson and involves a joint effort of both parties in building rich experiences and solving problems to maximize value. This aligns with Johnson et al., (2021, p.611), who defined co-creation value as a way “participants, through dialogue, jointly determine their sense of how to create value together. Vargo et al., (2008) emphasized that value is co-created through mutually beneficial interactions.

The collaborative approach has been proven to strengthen the bond between businesses and their customers, creating personalized and innovative products and services (Szarucki and Menet, 2018). This involvement in the co-production process allows companies to gather valuable information about their customers' preferences, needs, and requirements, enabling them to design solutions based on the exchange of information (Grönroos and Voima, 2013). Furthermore, co-production has an impact on Customer Citizenship Behaviours. When customers participate in producing a product or service, they

feel a sense of ownership and loyalty, leading to long-lasting customer relationships and improved customer retention (Assiouras et al., 2019).

End-users, as customers, have unique perspectives that may not be visible to a company's internal groups. By tapping into this collective intelligence, organisations can identify new opportunities, overcome challenges more effectively, and improve their products using genuine feedback from the customers' perspectives.

Marcos-Cuevas et al., (2016, p.97) describe value co-creation as all activities aimed at "understanding the processes, resources and practices which customers use to manage their activities." Hence, the process allows customers and real estate firms to create value through interaction. Firms and customers are no longer on opposite sides but aim to solve problems together (Galvagno and Dalli, 2014).

The theoretical formulation of Value Co-creation was approached by Ranjan and Read (2014), and addressed two different dimensions:

- (1) Co-production is essentially based on the exchange process. It involves the firm facilitating by sharing information and applying knowledge. The value created results from social exchange processes between firms and customers. This occurs through sharing expertise and engaging in cooperative behaviours. This concept assumes that the firm has control over the process. Value Co-Production is evident through joint collaboration, interaction, and willingness to participate (Malshe, et al., 2018).

- (2) Value-in-use: The value created is recognized only when used, not at its creation. This process occurs through consumption patterns, regardless of the firm's intervention, and extends beyond the co-production exchange process. The customer's usage situation specifically determines value co-creation.

These two sub-dimensions are different but complementary. They reinforce two pillars in the co-creation of value. In Table number 3 is an overview of the concept of Value Co-creation and its elements: Co-Production and Value-in-use.

Table 4 - Elements of Value Co-Creation

Main Construct	Sub-Dimensions	Definition	Categories	
Value Co-Creation	Co-Production	Involve working directly or indirectly with customers or participating in the Product design process.	Knowledge sharing	It is a firm's operant resource that encompasses acquiring knowledge shared by customers to uncover current and future needs;
			Equity	Fim's customer centricity and control sharing through facilitating environment;
			Interaction	It's the practical manifestation of Customer Participation and engagement.
	Value-in-use	It derives from ownership and consumption of a product or service, resulting in an experimental evaluation beyond its functional attributes.	Experience	Experience drives firms to produce products and services as well as enabling customer participation while linking these goods into their cognitive structures;
			Relationship	It is the foundation for an environment of collaboration processes, shaped by both parties' communication and engagement skills.
			Personalization	This can be translated into the uniqueness of the process, which reveals itself through a supportive context for the customer's unique usage situation.

Source: Elaborated by the author based on Ranjan and Read (2014)

Value creation has its foundations in social relationships and interactions, whose value is not only in the products that a firm launches to the market (firm offerings embedded with value) but also in the notion of value-in-use that is incorporated. The co-creation of value involves customers and firms interacting

and sharing resources to create value for both the customer and the organisation (Marcos-Cuevas et al., 2016).

The literature on the co-creation of value has extensively analysed the involvement and importance of customers in creating value. It has been widely advocated that the customer is always a co-creator of value (Grönroos and Voima, 2013; Vargo and Lusch, 2016). Therefore, further research should be conducted to gain a meticulous understanding of consumer behaviour (Ercsey, 2017). This perspective may have led to a general oversight of how the value co-creation process occurs and how much each participant contributes.

Nevertheless, Heinonen et al., (2010) mentioned the importance of a reverse co-creational perspective in understanding why customers choose to co-create value with the firm. Consequently, value is co-created through this reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship.

However, existent research has examined the direct impact of salespeople on generating revenue or profits rather than exploring other forms of value they might create, such as building customer relationships, enhancing brand reputation, or contributing to product development based on customer feedback (Hohenschwert, 2012; Macdonald et al., 2011). This research stream highlights the economic benefits of salespeople. There may be a limited view of the value created by salespeople because most research on this topic has mainly looked at the financial or monetary aspects of their contributions.

Customers are not always co-creators of value; under certain circumstances, they can co-create value with the service provider (Alnakhli et al., 2021; Grönroos, 2011). Therefore, creating value for the customer in this service-dominant context depends not only on acquiring in-depth customer knowledge but also on the ability to adapt and customize resources to the customer's usage situation. It also represents a new concept of sales as it shifts from deal closing to identifying opportunities for inserting value-added services into an ongoing relationship (Ulaga and Loveland, 2014).

We adhere to Petri and Jacob (2016) findings, which suggest a neutral and balanced approach to value co-creation. According to his work, customers and firms contribute equally to the process of resource integration, and business solutions and activities are not simply transferred from one party to another but rather shared and created collaboratively.

To add depth to the topic, value is established by the specific circumstances in which it is used (Value-in-use) as perceived by the person benefiting from it. This implies that as the exchange occurs, the perception of value is formed based on individual expectations, which are unique and cannot be replicated (Haas et al., 2012; Le Meunier-Fitzhugh, et al., 2011). Value-in-use is, therefore, an evaluation

of the product or service that further extends its functional attributes in a process that links the meaning of use to the customer uniqueness mental model (Ranjan and Read, 2014). The concept of "value-in-use" is fundamental to the Service-Dominant Logic (S-D Logic), which has developed from the Goods-Dominant Logic (G-D Logic) as a reminder of the importance of understanding the customer's perspective on value (Vargo et al., 2008, p.146). This entails analysing value from the customer's point of view, typically carried out by a salesperson.

The table below (Table Number 4) illustrates the main differences in the co-creation of value centricity of G-D Logic and S-D Logic:

Table 5 - Value Co-Creation Centricity (GDL - SDL)

Assumptions	G-D Logic	S-D Logic
Value Driver	Value-in-exchange	Value-in-use
Creator	Firm	Firm and customers
Process	Value proposition through product attributes	Firms propose value and customers continue value-creation through the usage
Role of Firm	Produce and Distribute Value	Propose and co-create value, provide service
Role of Goods	Units of Output with value	Materialization of benefits
Role of Customers	Use the value created by the firm	Co-create value through the integration of firm-provided resources with other resources

Source: Adapted from (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, p.7)

The importance of customers' perception of product quality shifts the focus from the quality of the product to the quality of the experience during its use, changing the locus of value creation from the point of sale to actual usage (Blaschke, et al., 2018). Furthermore, the role of the customer has evolved in this new approach to service. Rather than a customer-centric perspective where marketing professionals target, produce, promote and distribute to customers, the focus is now on the customer as an active participant in the co-creation of value, shifting the marketing focus to the interaction process.

Drawing on the core concepts of Value Co-creation from the S-D Logic perspective allowed a more thorough understanding of what value co-creation encompasses and stands for, as explored by various scholars (Aarikka-Stenroos and Jaakkola, 2012; Baumann, Le Meunier-FitzHugh, and Wilson, 2017; Vargo and Lusch, 2004):

- Value Proposition: The value proposition is believed to enhance the process of creating value, even though it doesn't contain an inherent value. When the beneficiary accepts the offer, the value proposition is fulfilled, acting as an integrator. Therefore, the value proposition is considered a facilitator of the value co-creation process;
- Actors: A value proposition is established among service systems through a shared, collaborative, and interdependent process among actors, namely the service offeror and the service beneficiary. The beneficiary actor benefits from the offeror actor, who offers the value proposition;
- Resources: Two new terms derived from S-D Logic are operand resources and operant resources. Operand resources are "resources on which an operation or act is performed to produce an effect" (Pels, 2012, p.65) and can act as a vehicle for value. These include "static, tangible, and passive components of the products" (Blaschke et al., 2018, p.403). Operant resources are used to work with operand resources. They include intangible and dynamic resources, such as human knowledge and skills, and are crucial for competitive advantage.
- Service: In S-D Logic, a service platform is described as a service networking platform connected internally and externally by value propositions. This forms a Service Ecosystem where services are exchanged for services. This means operant resources are integrated with operand resources and made available to actors seeking to create value.

Thus, the interaction process in the context of value co-creation remains fertile because value co-creation is inherent to buyer-seller interaction. Salespersons have adapted their roles towards this new paradigm, a partnership-building experience capable of leveraging organisational competitive advantage (Alnakhli et al., 2021). The salesperson is, therefore, accounted for a central role in the co-creation of value (Baumann and Le Meunier-FitzHugh, 2015) by assuming an “orchestrating” behaviour on the salesperson-customer engagement (Value Co-production) (Plouffe et al., 2020).

There is a consensus on the critical role of salespersons in co-creating value with customers. Salespersons demonstrate "orchestrating" behaviour when engaging with customers, which is crucial to value co-production.

Salespeople can utilize their unique relationship-building skills to show empathy and responsiveness to the customer's needs throughout the process, from the first contact to creating solutions and continuing with post-purchase services. This approach provides a competitive advantage by providing valuable service to the customer. From a value creation standpoint, salespeople can actively engage with

customers, identifying opportunities to create and develop value continuously through interaction (Baumann and Le Meunier-FitzHugh, 2015).

From a service-dominant logic perspective, the selling process is characterized by "touch" or "convergence" points where service is exchanged for service in the process of relationship optimization between systemic actors. The salesperson is key in institutional arrangements and relationship optimization for service exchange between interdependent actors (Hartmann et al., 2018).

Every sales encounter is unique and cannot be replicated. This requires the sales staff to constantly adapt their approaches and resources to meet specific customer requirements and create value. Salespersons can (1) share information collected and translated from customers within the firm, and (2) promote cross-functional integration to ensure that the value created during customer interactions is reflected in the firm's value proposition (Blaschke et al., 2018; Blocker et al., 2012).

Salespeople are essential when identifying customers' problems or needs in today's co-creational business atmosphere. Salespersons are often required to engage with customers to co-create solutions in a broad context and networking mechanism (intra-organisation and extra-organisation) (Macdonald et al., 2011; Marcos-Cuevas et al., 2016).

Value co-creation results from cooperation between salespeople and customers. In this model, salespersons try to offer a positive experience by personalizing products and services to the customer's specific needs. Ultimately, salespersons attempt to engage customers through a service exchange that maximizes value to both parties. The underlying benefit for employees, such as salespersons, is that they are firm engagement tools and knowledge brokers that facilitate continuous improvement of value co-creation strategies. In line with Crick et al. (2020), when employees are committed to collaborating with their customers by collecting and treating knowledge, they can also enhance sales performance by presenting and developing stronger value propositions.

Recent studies have acknowledged that the ideal value proposition is a joint outcome based on a dyadic relationship between supplier and customer in a harmonic integration of resources and processes shared by both parties (Eggert et al., 2018; Macdonald et al., 2016).

From our viewpoint, salespeople are well-placed to gather information about each customer's uniqueness and specific needs regarding the value they receive. In practice, when sales proposals are customized through knowledge exchange between the supplier and customer, Value Co-Creation can be revived by the customer's customers (Friend et al., 2020). Over the past few decades, Value Co-Creation has been the focus of extensive academic research, emphasising customer centricity (Petri

and Jacob, 2016). This has led to a misconception that service providers passively accept whatever value is created and need help to deliver value independently. This contradicts the proactive approach taken by many service providers, who actively facilitate value creation (Baumann et al., 2017; Vargo and Lusch, 2008).

As we delve deeper into the Value Co-Creation literature, it becomes apparent that more needs to be considered for the potential impact that sales professionals can have on the co-creational process at a personal level. Sales professionals hold an indisputable position for knowledge receptivity and require essential relational skills, which are expected, if not mandatory, for any sales role (Alnakhli et al., 2021).

2.2.1. Value Co-Creation: The Case of Real Estate Salesperson

In the last decade, there has been significant growth in the financial markets across various industries in Portugal. In fact, after the 2008 crisis, central banks undertook measures that resulted in expansionist policies to stimulate consumption, increase liquidity, and rejuvenate the economy. These measures increased demand, and markets, generally, profited from it. One of the mentioned measures above, implemented by central banks to stimulate economic expansion, focused on reducing interest rates. This stimulus gave companies and individuals access to money and, consequently, increased consumption. This factor raised the attractiveness of the financial markets to investors, making the real estate market grow abruptly in the last decade in Portugal. Adding to low interest rates, decreasing unemployment rate, and the increase in the income of Portuguese families, it is clear why this sector has been one of the most dynamic in recent years. Furthermore, the substantial increase in tourism and the number of foreigners residing in the country (potentiated by the Golden Visa Program) were also important factors in its growth (Drago, 2021).

In recent years, particularly in 2018, 2019, and again in 2022, there has been a significant increase in the number of foreign residents in Portugal due to demographic changes and the success of the Portuguese economy. This increase has brought new dynamics to the real estate business in Portugal, impacting sales representatives as well. Nowadays, being a real estate consultant is much more than just a job. Like any other commercial function, the real estate salesperson (or consultant) plays a crucial role in making someone's dream or desire of owning a property a reality, to make a profit.

A career in real estate sales is highly challenging due to the evolving job description in Portugal in recent years. Real estate consultants are no longer accurately represented by the title "house salesperson." This outdated designation must reflect these professionals' current commercial activities, responsibilities, and critical concerns, which have evolved to meet the changing market and customer needs.

The role of salespeople in organisational success is undeniably important and has received significant attention in sales literature. Salespeople hold a central position in organisations because they represent organisational customers, generate income, and foster long-term customer relationships (Li, et al., 2020). They serve as a tool for meeting customer demands effectively communicating products or services that provide value to customers. Salespeople are personally responsible for understanding and fulfilling customer wants and needs (Aqmala and Ardyan, 2019).

In this sense, a real estate salesperson does much more than sell houses or help their clients find the property they want to buy. The profession of real estate salesperson is quite complex and is divided into four fundamental areas: prospecting, property raising, selling, and following up on clients (Cambra-Fierroa, Jesús and Grott, 2017; Snyder, Claffey, and Cistulli, 2011)

- Prospecting: Real estate salespeople must be experts in their area to provide effective prospecting services. This includes monitoring price fluctuations, property types, lifestyle changes, engaging with residents, and identifying business opportunities.
- Property Rasing: The real estate salesperson has to find potential buyers (prospecting) and raise properties, which is a crucial part of their daily routine. This involves various tasks, such as evaluating the property's value, preparing a service presentation, and creating a marketing plan to demonstrate how the sales process will benefit the client.
- Sale (Value co-production): To successfully sell a property, it is essential to understand all of the customer's requirements, desires, needs, and preferences, and be well-versed in all legal aspects related to the transaction. Property owners and buyers often are unfamiliar with the documents and processes necessary to complete the transaction, making it crucial for them to seek professional guidance.
- Customer follow-up (Value-in-use): The relationship with customers does not end after the property sale. Following up with customers after the sale helps real estate salespeople strengthen their relationships with clients, increasing the probability of getting new business through the most effective channel: positive referrals.

The value creation process in this sector is composed of two actors. The first is the salesperson who provides for product availability, specifications, and knowledge (e.g., availability in the portfolio, delivery dates, visiting and presenting the product, product personalization and product display and presentation). The second actor is the customer, who integrates these resources into their own usage context—combining the salesperson's knowledge with their own operant resources (skills, experiences, and judgments) to co-create value through adoption, feedback, and further customization. The Service-dominant logic has changed the foundations of the long-accepted goods-dominant logic in marketing science. Service is the foundational basis for exchange in the market, where knowledge and skills are applied for the benefit of others (Grönroos, 2011; Vargo et al., 2008).

The change significantly impacted the co-creation process in the real estate industry. Often, real estate salespeople expanded their services and improved their performance. Their role evolved into that of an advisor and knowledge facilitator, particularly in building a valuable proposition, including handling product paperwork, financing, and cross-selling financial products with builders.

The salesperson is responsible for developing and nurturing strategies for creating and extracting value from customer interactions (Baumann and Le Meunier-FitzHugh, 2015; Plouffe et al., 2020). An essential issue is how value is perceived among the different actors and how these actors add value in their specific context (Baumann and Le Meunier-FitzHugh, 2015; Haas et al., 2012).

2.2.2. Value Co-Creation and the proposed antecedents in the conceptual model

As mentioned, value co-creation involves a joint effort from both the customer and the supplier. Value is created collaboratively through dynamic, interactive, and mutual exchanging processes, resulting in positive outcomes for both parties (positive experiences for both customers and salespersons and product personalization).

The underlying benefit for salespersons is that they are firm engagement tools and knowledge brokers that facilitate the continuous improvement of value co-creation strategies. In line with Crick et al., (2020), when salespersons are committed to collaborating with their customers by collecting and treating knowledge, they can also enhance sales performance by presenting and developing stronger value propositions.

Recent studies have acknowledged that the ideal value proposition is a joint outcome based on a dyadic relationship between supplier and customer in a harmonic integration of resources and processes shared by both parties (Eggert et al., 2018; Macdonald et al., 2016).

Hohenschwert (2012) asserts that salespersons play unique roles in generating customer value, manifested through sharing knowledge, networks (e.g., relationships), time, labour and dedication.

The resources or capabilities that capture our attention are time and involvement, allowing salespeople to differentiate themselves when interacting with customers. While all services from a company are expected to deliver what is promised, such as product or service quality, on-time deliveries, and correct invoicing, the way salespeople involve themselves and make themselves available to customers is highly appreciated. In the eyes of the customer, these behaviours emphasise the availability to work long and extra hours (time, labour and involvement) to support the customer in difficult times and different needs – Value Based Selling.

In the literature, value-based selling is defined as the extent to which a salesperson collaborates with the customer to develop a market offering that translates benefits into monetary terms. This is achieved through a deep understanding of the customer's business model and ultimately contributes to the customer's profitability (Terho et al., 2015).

Value-based selling (VBS) is closely tied to the interaction between the seller and the customer to effectively co-create value (Grönroos, 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2004). This is because sales personnel must have the knowledge and understanding to interpret value for the customer (Le Meunier-FitzHugh et al., 2011).

Salespeople can leverage their unique relationship-building skills to demonstrate empathy and responsiveness to the customer's needs. This starts from the initial contact, extends to co-creating solutions, and continues to the post-purchase services. The competitive advantage of this process lies in providing valuable service to the customer. Therefore, in B2B markets, salespeople who share the customer's perspective will enhance customer value and, as a result, demonstrate the potential value for the customer (Terho et al., 2015).

This allows for increasing levels of customer satisfaction since it continuously adjusts the organisation’s value proposition. It seems evident that the information the salesperson collects is crucial for the results to be reflected in their performance and to create value in the selling process.

Nevertheless, sales jobs are heterogeneous across companies. Salesperson activity may differ significantly across firms, business activities, and the contextual economic environment. As mentioned, the uniqueness of the selling situation implies that salesperson responsibilities vary across several domains.

Mele, (2011) refers to the scarcity of studies on conflicts and value co-creation, extending the theory by approaching the adverse outcomes of conflict on the value creation process as it threatens interpersonal relationships among actors involved, resulting in resource waste. This scarcity of individual perceived stress and personal conflicts has fuelled our research to study the drivers of interpersonal relationship aspects that may represent potential adverse effects on value co-creation processes.

Several studies have investigated the causes of WFC and its detrimental effects on work performance. Management literature emphasizes the negative impact of WFC on turnover and absenteeism (e.g., Carlson et al., 2000; Eby et al., 2005; Netemeyer et al., 2005; Warner and Hausdorf, 2009). Hence, this is a reason for concern for managers in the sales field and the real estate sector is no exception.

The WFC affects well-being, health (Tabassum et al., 2017), and overall life quality (Warner and Hausdorf, 2009). Hence, several studies pinpoint the work-environment characteristics that predict WFC, such as job type, organisational promotions and educational degree (e.g., Ahmad, 2008; Chelariu and Stump, 2011; Miao and Wang, 2017). This research stream emphasizes the detrimental effects of WFC, including increased stress, absenteeism, turnover, leave intentions, and counterproductive organisational behaviours.

The vast research on WFC concluded that there are negative implications on employees and organisational performance despite positive outcomes. One of the revised studies focuses on the specific impacts of WFC on Customer Purchase Intentions (CPI), customer-oriented extra-role performance (COERP), and Employee In-Role Performance (IRP) in both B2B and B2C settings (Netemeyer et al., 2005). The study by Netemeyer et al. (2005) conclusively demonstrates that work-family conflict (WFC) directly influences employee performance and customer outcomes. Specifically, the study establishes that WFC significantly impacts employees' extra-role performance, and further reveals that extra-role performance detrimentally affects customer purchase intentions.

Building upon the insights from Netemeyer et al. (2005), our study explicitly targets customer service employees. Netemeyer's research demonstrates that these employees face significant stress levels and are dedicated to achieving a solid work-life balance. Furthermore, these employees consistently excel in assist and promoting the firm's products and services, effectively enhancing its image.

Salespersons interact closely with customers, allowing them to better understand and convey customer needs and expectations to organisational managers and marketing personnel. This important characteristic is also shared by service employees (Netemeyer et al., 2005).

In this regard, the salesperson is likely to experience higher stress levels because of the intensive interactions between the salesperson and the customers and co-workers, who also compete for the same career outcomes, such as a job promotion.

The existing literature on WFC lacks any analysis of the potential effects of WFC as an antecedent in obstructing or mitigating the value co-creation process. It is assumed that individuals experiencing a strong WFC cannot adequately perform their professional duties (Hall et al., 2010). Salesperson activities significantly impact value creation, which is crucial for enhancing an organisation's sustainable performance (Hoobler et al., 2010; Netemeyer et al., 2005; Warner and Hausdorf, 2009). This importance is underscored by its positive effects on salesperson performance (Ismael and Emeagwali, 2019; Terho et al., 2015) and consumer satisfaction, loyalty, and trust (Garcia et al., 2014).

Overall, the work-family relationship will strongly impact how a salesperson remains job-functional and can co-create value in the customer relationship.

Building on this logic, we propose the following two hypotheses:

H3: WFC is negatively related to Value Co-Creation in the Real Estate sector.

H4: FWC is negatively related to Value Co-Creation in the Real Estate sector.

2.2.3. Value Co-Creation Outcomes

Alnakhli et al. (2021) suggest that the direct impact of value co-creation on sales performance is substantial, independent of the salesperson's efforts to enhance relationships through additional activities. This study adds to the sales literature by empirically examining the factors that enable salespeople to co-create value with customers. The positive impact on sales performance offers insights into how salespeople can engage in value co-creation to improve their sales outcomes.

At the personal level, service employees invest significant effort into primary service tasks, acknowledging their duty to facilitate customer engagement and participation in co-production processes. Co-production requires employees to manage complex cognitive and physical tasks, leading to stress that affects job performance and well-being (Wu, et al., 2022).

Value co-creation offers numerous benefits for consumers and retailers, including increased customer satisfaction, enhanced loyalty and improved profitability as highlighted by Li, (2023). Additionally, value co-creation has been found to have a positive association with post-recovery performance metrics such as satisfaction, repurchase intention, and word-of-mouth (Zhang and Jin, 2020) and overall sales performance (Alnakhli et al., 2021).

The 2023 study by Bal et al. reviews how different groups perceive and benefit from Value Co-Creation. It looks at the economic, experiential, functional, relational, personal growth, and corporate sustainability aspects within the VCC framework. This comprehensive analysis highlights the diverse outcomes and benefits anticipated and achieved through collaborative efforts in VCC processes, offering insights into the complex dynamics of stakeholder engagement in value creation.

Today's consumers demand more personalized experiences and actively pressure businesses to engage in the co-creation of value. This shift is driven by consumers' ability to access information globally, offer feedback directly to companies and engage in community discussions and innovations. The co-creation movement seeks to involve customers directly in creating value and meaning, effectively blurring the lines between company and consumer roles. This evolution transforms consumers into active partners and change agents, holding critical knowledge assets. Understanding and integrating co-creation practices becomes essential as businesses navigate this changing landscape. This trend, which emphasizes collaboration between consumers and firms in innovation and value creation, is too significant for companies aiming to thrive in the modern market to disregard.

In the context of B2B relationships, sales roles are transforming, shifting their focus towards fostering value co-creation within service ecosystems. The changes in the sales approach indicate a more involved interaction with the various groups of people involved, going beyond the usual sales methods (Corsaro and Maggioni, 2022). This emphasizes the need to incorporate digital tools, adjust sales responsibilities, and promote cooperation among different parties to create value together efficiently.

The concept of value co-creation has undeniably captured significant interest in the marketing discipline over the last two decades. This marks a clear paradigm shift towards more collaborative and participative approaches to generating value. It's increasingly evident that companies recognise the immense potential of harnessing their customers' insights and expertise to create products and services that more closely align with consumer needs and preferences.

The value co-creation mechanism offers a unique opportunity to engage customers directly in developing products and services. This collaborative process not only fosters the generation of innovative ideas and solutions but also cements robust, enduring relationships between companies and their customers. Furthermore, by strategically implementing value co-creation practices, companies are positioned to drive innovation and secure a competitive edge.

2.3. Job Burnout in Sales

Job Burnout is a psychic term created in the mid-1970s. It has become a widely used term for work-related stress and adverse work-related outcomes. The term "Burnout Syndrome" has gained acceptance among scholars and society. It describes a state of emotional exhaustion and cynicism common among working individuals (Shepherd et al., 2011).

The term "burning out" first appeared as a metaphor that compares a burning candle to a person's depleted resources. It emphasizes that personal resources are limited and need to be conserved. An employee who experiences burnout without proper care will reach exhaustion, which affects their ability to remain highly engaged and cope with adverse work effects (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

Although countless studies in various research fields, have approached the term, they all agree that Burnout is generated by work-related issues. Furthermore, Job Burnout represents a consequence of chronic stress exposure, resulting in an individual’s incapacity to perform their job (Castanheira and Chambel, 2010). Hence, it is a concept that encompasses almost any negative reaction to work-related

stress (Shepherd et al., 2011) or even an irreversible form of fatigue that requires medical treatment (Aniţei et al., 2015).

Similarly to the WFC, Job Burnout also represents a considerable amount of costs for both individuals and organisations, making its study, beyond a necessity, a way of providing directions to improve the working conditions of employees. Hence, its consequences majorly impact a firm's productivity and personal health.

Burnout is a critical consequence of individuals' inability to fulfil their work and family responsibilities because they lack the necessary resources to cope effectively with conflicting responsibilities (Taylor et al., 2019). According to Schaufeli et al. (2009), burnout has spread throughout the globe as a consequence of globalization and privatization for the modern workforce, resulting from new demands, skills, types of work, time strain issues, higher productivity, and long working hours.

Moreover, a wide range of studies (Ambrose et al., 2014; Hsieh and Hsieh, 2003) refer to the considerable body of literature that found work characteristics contributing directly to Job burnout, such as role ambiguity, role overload, and role conflict.

The job burnout construct comprises three sub-dimensions: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Diminished Personal accomplishment (Ambrose et al., 2014; Castanheira and Chambel, 2010; Hsieh and Hsieh, 2003; Shepherd et al., 2011).

a) Emotional Exhaustion: Described as a psychological condition where an individual cannot invest more energy in themselves, burnout is a typical symptom of the stress component (Hsieh and Hsieh, 2003). Furthermore, studies find Emotional Exhaustion to be a core explanatory dimension of burnout (Hall et al., 2010; Lewin and Sager, 2007);
b) Depersonalization or cynicism (Maslach et al., 2001): When an individual develops cynical attitudes toward their job or clients, it is a response to a work environment perceived as oppressive, alienating, and bureaucratic (Hsieh and Hsieh, 2003);
c) Diminished personal accomplishment or inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001): it is a negative perception of oneself when performing a task (Lewin and Sager, 2007), manifesting itself through increased dissatisfaction with their work-related progress (Hsieh and Hsieh, 2003).

Salespersons are often pushed into burnout due to several factors. These include long working hours, frequent travel, managing many customers, lack of time for family, and inadequate compensation. These factors lead to psychological and physical fatigue ultimately resulting in emotional exhaustion over time (Maslach et al., 2001).

Employees suffering from Burnout consider leaving the organisation (Turnover Intentions), which makes the study of Burnout on Sales a core concern to marketing and management scholars (Babakus et al., 2009; Lewin and Sager, 2007). While the literature on Burnout is vast in the organisational and occupational research field, there is still an extensive and broad avenue for research examining burnout in the marketing literature (Lewin and Sager, 2007).

Job burnout may be attributed to two types of stressors: a) hindrance stressors, which include resource inadequacies, role conflict, role ambiguity, and work overload; b) challenge stressors, which encompass pressure to complete tasks, time-related issues and the level of attention required to perform a task.

Certain types of stress have the "raison d'être" of sharpening and motivating positive emotions, promoting personal growth and effort when completing work tasks. In contrast, hindrance stressors reduce motivation by inducing negative emotions that can harm work performance (Westbrook and Peterson, 2020).

Table number 5 summarises the research on Burnout outcomes, including where Burnout occurs and who is susceptible to it, based on the seminal work of Maslach et al. (2001).

Table 6 - Summary of Burnout Outcomes

Burnout	Outcomes	Job Performance	It is associated with absenteeism, intention to leave turnover intentions, low productivity and effectiveness, reduced commitment and decreased job satisfaction.
		Health	Emotional Exhaustion predominance over the other two components in predicting stress-related outcomes; mental illness (neuroceticism) and mental dysfunction (anxiety, depression and decreased self-esteem).
	Situational Factors	Job Characteristics	Quantitative: Response to workoverload (hours worked and number of clients); Qualitative: Job demands (role ambiguity, role conflict, severity of customers problems to solve), Job Demands (Social or Supervisory Support, information and Control, decision making jobs and lack of autonomy)
		Occupational Characteristics	Human services and education.
		Organisational Characteristics	Rethinking the situational context of Burnout. Immediate context vs contextual factors including hierarquies, operating rules, resources, space distribution, organisational processes and values.
	Individual Factors	Demographics Characteristics	Age, gender, marital status and education level.
		Personality Characteristics	Levels of hardiness, external/internal locus of control, lower self-esteem, coping mechanisms, neuroticism (trait anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, vulnerability and Type-A behaviours (competition, time-pressured lifestyle, hostility and excessive need for control).
		Job Attitudes	Expectations (realistic or idealistic) bring a likelihood of success to the job.

Source: Elaborated by the Author based on Maslach et al. (2001)

The literature on job burnout advocates a breakdown of burnout dimensions (Bande et al., 2015; Hsieh and Hsieh, 2003) to better understand the phenomenon (Low, et al., 2001). Job burnout is often confused with feeling exhausted. When someone experiences depersonalisation (cynicism) and diminished personal accomplishment (reduced professional efficacy), it usually indicates a work-related situation of job burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

Furthermore, and more importantly, burnout behaves in a non-linear progression, manifesting itself firstly with reduced personal accomplishment, followed by depersonalisation, leading to emotional exhaustion as hopelessness and despair take over (Ambrose et al., 2014).

Emotional Exhaustion is the most evident indication of Burnout, but basing assumptions solely on this aspect may lead to a limited understanding of the crucial issues that professionals face in their work (Maslach et al., 2001). People often use the term "burnout" to describe feeling exhausted, but its meaning varies between cultures. Studies that focus only on individual burnout experiences may not provide a complete understanding of the concept.

Furthermore, job burnout can result from a need for more alignment between an individual's values and those of the organisation. This misalignment can stem from differences in work strategies, such as sales orientation versus customer orientation, or discrepancies between an organisation's stated values and its actual actions (Schaufeli et al., 2009)

The responsibilities of Salespersons as boundary spanners can lead to high levels of job stress (Bande et al., 2019; Boles et al., 2003; Kemp et al., 2012; Lewin and Sager, 2007; Shepherd et al., 2011). These stressors may cause Salespersons to experience emotional exhaustion due to perceived work-related inconsistencies (Lewin and Sager, 2007). It has been discovered that prolonged face-to-face interactions with overwhelming demands significantly contribute to emotional exhaustion (Hsieh and Hsieh, 2003). Hence, the emotional needs that salespersons may be experiencing can influence the quality of their relationships or cooperation with their customers, disregarding the value proposition or maximising improved service levels.

The consequences of burnout are essential issues that need to be analysed in personal selling research. According to Low et al. (2001), the consequences of burnout may have two distinct natures: psychological (job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and turnover intentions) and behavioural (salesperson performance). In the literature, it is noted that real estate salespersons often experience high levels of stress while carrying out their duties. This is primarily due to the performance demands and unclear job requirements they face while trying to satisfy the interests of both their clients and their

sales managers (brokers) (Snyder et al., 2011). The same study expands on the existing Burnout literature by showing that Burnout has been extensively studied in human service professions such as teachers, nurses, social workers, and real estate salespeople. Real estate salespeople share human service and sales work characteristics, where personal communication and frequent customer interaction are inherently demanding and stressful (Snyder et al., 2011; Castanheira and Chambel, 2010; Low et al., 2001). Despite the work of Snyder et al. (2011), which mainly focused on real estate agents, their results and conclusions could be more open on the level (low/high levels of personal accomplishment, depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion) of the Burnout construct. It has focused on the relationship among these sub-dimensions instead.

A gap in the literature emerges throughout the literature review of burnout in the sales context. There is a clear distinction between the different roles of Salespersons and their responsibilities (Services or field Salespersons), and thus, the results of previous studies cannot be generalized. Also, more studies are needed to address the subject adequately (Castanheira and Chambel, 2010).

Individuals experiencing "burnout" are characterized by a lack of empathy and the development of damaging relationships with their clients (Taylor et al., 2019). Consequently, if the salesperson's emotional state diminishes the relationship's quality, we firmly believe that the value exchange during personal interactions will be compromised.

Edmondson et al. (2019) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate emotional exhaustion among salespeople, which is identified as a central component of burnout. In their study, emotional exhaustion significantly impacted on job satisfaction, organisational commitment, turnover intentions, and performance. They also discovered that role ambiguity, conflict, work overload, and work-family conflict (WFC) are strong positive antecedents of emotional exhaustion. Our study also confirmed that WFC is a significant antecedent of job burnout, highlighting the crucial role of managing work-life balance in reducing burnout and its negative impact on employee well-being and organisational outcomes.

Several factors have been identified as predictors of burnout in the workplace. These include high job demands (Schaufeli et al., 2009; Westbrook and Peterson, 2020), lack of personal control (Westbrook and Peterson, 2020), inadequate social support (Lewin and Sager, 2007), unclear job roles, and conflicting expectations. Research has shown that unclear job roles and conflicting expectations strongly predict emotional exhaustion and burnout. These factors increase cognitive load and stress, leading to more significant employee burnout (Sabagh, et al., 2018).

Burnout has been associated with adverse outcomes, such as decreased job performance and organisational commitment (Edmondson et al., 2019), work-family conflict (Rod and Ashill, 2015), customer satisfaction (Shoshan and Sonnentag, 2020), reduced sales performance (Peasley et al., 2020), and intention to leave the job (Edmondson et al., 2019; Wu, Hu, and Zheng, 2019).

It is essential to consider individual salesperson characteristics, such as experience, selling time, and customer orientation, when giving autonomy to sales staff. While it's commonly believed that independence is always beneficial, managers balance autonomy with proper resources and support to reduce burnout and improve salesperson performance and well-being. Granting autonomy generally helps reduce emotional exhaustion, increase personal accomplishment, and decrease customer depersonalisation. However, giving too much independence can lead to increased emotional exhaustion and customer depersonalization, especially among inexperienced salespeople and those with lower customer orientation (Matthews et al., 2018).

Interventions aimed at increasing work engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2009), providing organisational support, managing stress (Peasley et al., 2020), and creating supportive work environments (Chen et al., 2024) have shown promise in reducing job burnout. While literature emphasizes the role of organisations in mitigating burnout, individual characteristics are also crucial. Organisations should address this by establishing clear role definitions, supportive management, social support, and work-life balance policies (Bande et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2024). At the individual level, training programs should prioritize problem-focused coping strategies over emotion-focused coping strategies. Moreover, training should enhance selling skills to improve salespeople's self-efficacy (Bande et al., 2015; Ben-Zur and Yagil, 2005; Lewin and Sager, 2007).

2.3.1. The impact of Job Burnout on Value Co-Creation

The literature includes multiple studies on job performance in sales (Peasley et al., 2020). In addition, job burnout has been found to negatively impact job performance. This can manifest as deliberate absenteeism, an intention to leave the job or a high turnover rate. It can also result in lower productivity and reduced work effectiveness for those who remain on the job (Maslach et al., 2001).

From a theoretical standpoint, burnout depletes the cognitive, emotional, and relational resources required for employees to engage meaningfully with customers. Within the Job Demands–Resources framework, emotional exhaustion is conceptualised as a state of resource loss that undermines

employees' capacity to participate in collaborative and interactive service behaviours (Bakker, 2023; Demerouti et al., 1999).

While some studies show that burnout negatively affects job performance, others are more cautious, suggesting that when employees are attentive and concerned, they may perform better (Edmondson et al., 2019). Salespeople who actively work to create value with their customers by staying attuned to their changing expectations and needs may also be more likely to experience job burnout. Due to the boundary-spanning effect of the sales role in the actual business context, salespersons experience internal (firm, peers, and supervisor) and external (e.g., customers) pressures, leading to an imbalance in engagement with work after hours. Netemeyer et al. (2005) state that job stress can impact employee performance. This includes their regular job duties and the additional efforts they make for customers. However, the study found that job stress had a more substantial impact on regular job duties.

The responsibilities and accomplishments expected from salespeople can lead to significant job stress and burnout (Bande et al., 2019; Boles et al., 2003; Kemp et al., 2012; Lewin and Sager, 2007; Shepherd et al., 2011). Therefore, sales managers should establish achievable, realistic goals tied to perceived monetary rewards.

Individuals experiencing burnout often display reduced empathy and emotional availability, harming the quality of interpersonal exchanges (Taylor et al., 2019). Since value co-creation fundamentally relies on relational interaction, dialogue, and mutual resource integration between the employee and the customer (Grönroos, 2017; Vargo & Lusch, 2016), such emotional depletion is likely to impede co-creative behaviours.

Job burnout can lead to emotional exhaustion, resulting in the desire to leave the job to escape a difficult situation. In addition, the literature shows that role overload and the demands required by personal interactions, with face-to-face long-lasting interactions, are strong determinants of emotional exhaustion (Hsieh and Hsieh, 2003).

In line with this, Boles, (2001) acknowledged that salespeople are particularly susceptible to job burnout due to the nature of their role, namely how they deal with demanding customers, customer complaints, fulfil their needs, and the demotivation associated with an unsuccessful closing sale. As previously noted, Burnout has been widely researched in human-service jobs (Snyder et al., 2011), where personal communication and frequent interaction with customers are, by themselves, demanding and stressful (Castanheira and Chambel, 2010; Low et al., 2001; Snyder et al., 2011).

Extensive research has supported the positive outcomes of the relationship between actors in the Value Co-Creation process, but there is also a lesser-researched dark side to it. The interactions between salespersons and customers may lead to negative consequences and outcomes, causing Value Co-Destruction, mainly when strong negative emotions are exhibited (Dziewanowska and Kacprzak, 2020). In fact, consequences arise when burnt-out employees interact with others, which may negatively impact customer service perceptions, leading to poor performance outcomes (Nesher and Sonnentag, 2020).

Recent work on the “dark side” of service encounters suggests that emotional strain reduces employees’ ability to engage in co-creative activities, thereby lowering the value jointly produced with customers (Terblanche, 2024). This implies that burnout not only affects traditional job performance outcomes but can also damage the collaborative processes underpinning value co-creation.

Salespersons must utilize specific skills to adapt their behaviour to each selling situation and effectively contribute to the organisation's performance (Waseem et al., 2018). FitzPatrick et al., (2015) referred to the direct interaction between a customer and a provider as a "co-creation platform" where value is generated through their engagement in the value-generation process.

Hence, we expect that salespersons who reach their sales quotas will be confident, preventing demotivation, depersonalisation, and feelings of emotional exhaustion and diminished accomplishment. On the contrary, if salespeople frequently miss their sales targets, feelings of inadequacy, demotivation, and diminished personal accomplishment will arise (Lewin and Sager, 2007). Some authors advocate that there is a negative connection between burnout and the performance of salespeople, both in their behaviour and their results, especially in face-to-face selling situations (Low et al., 2001).

Burnout significantly impacts individuals working closely with their leaders (Brummelhuis, et al., 2014). As a result, burnout feelings may also affect customers who work directly with their salesperson to co-create value, possibly leading to lower levels of confidence and engagement, with consequences that still need to be fully understood.

Given the previous rationale, burnout is still essential in personal selling. This is because the available literature contains conflicting results, and we need to expand the concept of value co-creation. Our research suggests that job burnout mediates the impact of work-family conflict (WFC) on value co-creation.

Value co-creation requires continuous input from users as a form of resource investment. When individuals experience resource depletion, they tend to conserve what remains and reduce further input. Therefore, emotionally exhausted salespeople instinctively limit their resource expenditure, reducing

value co-creation (Jia et al., 2023). Emotional intelligence therefore may operate as a buffer because it preserves the relational capabilities necessary for co-creation, even under conditions of resource depletion associated with burnout (Boadi et al., 2020).

Building upon the findings of Boadi et al, (2020), stated that emotional intelligence (EI) can mitigate the adverse effects of job burnout on value co-creation behaviours. Specifically, employees with higher EI will be better equipped to manage the emotional exhaustion and depersonalization associated with burnout, thereby maintaining their engagement in co-creational activities. This hypothesis is supported by evidence that EI helps employees navigate stressful interactions and sustain positive behaviours.

Research has shown that salespeople's expression of emotions during interactions is crucial in creating connections and developing value propositions with customers, especially in complex B2B sales settings (Johnson et al., 2021). Managing and using emotions effectively is essential for achieving successful value co-creation. Salespeople with emotional intelligence can better engage with customers and build cooperative relationships (Delpechitre et al., 2018).

The importance of emotional behaviours is well-documented. However, our research has found a gap in understanding the detrimental effects of job burnout on the co-creation process. Job burnout, which includes emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment, can significantly impede a salesperson's ability to engage with customers effectively. This not only affects the value co-creation (VCC) but also influences the overall service exchange process. Our study emphasizes the need to address job burnout as a critical factor that can negatively impact the performance of salespeople and their interactions with customers, ultimately affecting the outcomes of value co-creation.

Taken together, burnout diminishes the emotional, cognitive and relational resources that salespeople require to participate actively in the co-creation process. As value co-creation depends on engagement, dialogue, adaptability, and the ability to integrate resources with the customer (Hansen et al., 2020; Vargo & Lusch, 2016), emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation are likely to reduce these behaviours. Accordingly, we expect that higher levels of burnout will correspond to lower levels of value co-creation in the real estate selling context.

H5: Job Burnout is negatively related to Value Co-creation in the Real Estate Sector.

2.3.2. The impact of Job Burnout on Customer Orientation

Customer orientation has long been conceptualised as a set of effortful, encounter-level behaviours—including empathic responding, adaptive selling and attentiveness to customer needs — through which frontline employees create value in interactions (Saxe & Weitz, 1982; Franke & Park, 2006; Kassemeier et al., 2022).

Evidence shows that customer-oriented salespersons actively shape value outcomes in the encounter, including price-negotiation contexts (Kassemeier, et al., 2022); that adaptive behaviour in the interaction is a core behavioural facet of effective selling (Franke & Park, 2006); and that employees' affective and well-being states condition these behaviours and their downstream customer consequences (Good et al., 2024; Terblanche, 2024).

Theoretically, the link between burnout and customer orientation is well grounded in the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) and Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion, reflects a state of resource depletion that undermines employees' capacity to enact effortful, relational and adaptive behaviours (Bakker et al., 2023; Demerouti et al., 2001). Because CO requires sustained emotional, cognitive and relational investment, employees experiencing burnout are less able to allocate resources to customer-focused behaviours.

When employees experience burnout — especially emotional exhaustion — these customer-oriented behaviours are among the first to deteriorate, as employees conserve remaining resources and reduce investment in relational and adaptive behaviours (Bakker et al., 2023). This mechanism is consistent with COR theory and explains why emotional strain leads to diminished helpfulness, responsiveness and interactional quality.

A growing body of work links stressful customer dynamics to lower customer orientation via emotional exhaustion. Reviews and meta-analyses show that customer mistreatment increases negative affect and exhaustion, which translate into poorer customer-facing conduct (e.g., reduced helpfulness, patience, and constructive dialogue) and weaker service outcomes across service and hospitality settings (Wu, 2023). Daily-process and field studies converge on the same mechanism: uncivil or abusive customer encounters undermine next-day service behaviours by depleting resources and elevating exhaustion (Hur et al., 2022. Complementary evidence indicates that incivility pressures employees' states (e.g.,

strain/exhaustion) and dampens downstream attitudes and behaviours relevant to customer orientation, with some buffering by individual or contextual resources (Yin et al., 2023; Shahzad et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, complementary findings highlight the other side of this mechanism: strengthening employees' personal resources (e.g., mindfulness, resilience) is associated with more customer-oriented behaviour, suggesting that when strain is lower (or resources are higher), customer orientation is easier to sustain during the encounter. This inverse alignment reinforces the expectation that higher burnout is associated with lower CO (Good et al., 2023)

Finally, sectoral studies close to sales and call-centre contexts indicate that burnout degrades customer-contact quality and downstream customer experience, consistent with the view that strain erodes the behaviours through which customer value is created (i.e., the practical expression of customer orientation during the interaction) (Good et al., 2023; Terblanche, 2024).

Colin et al. (2022), examine how frontline employee's burnout impacts encounter quality and report negative effects on rapport and customer orientation, with deterioration in customer experience during telephone interactions. Their findings reinforce the resource-depletion perspective of Job Burnout theory and the customer's perceived experience suffers accordingly.

Across recent service domains, the pattern is consistent: burnout is negatively related to customer orientation because resource loss and emotional strain attenuate prosocial behaviours that define CO in practice. This provides contemporary support for H6, which posits that:

H6. Job Burnout is negatively related to Customer Orientation in real estate salespersons.

2.4. Customer Orientation and Value Co-Creation in Sales

Customer Orientation (CO) is how individuals prioritize meeting customer needs and delivering exceptional service (Blocker et al., 2011). A customer-oriented approach is often considered more beneficial for a business's long-term success because it fosters customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, and higher customer retention rates (Singh and Koshy, 2011). However, finding the right balance between sales and customer orientation is crucial, as businesses still need to meet revenue targets while ensuring customer satisfaction.

Customer orientation research has conclusively demonstrated that individual and organisational factors play a significant role in its development and expression. Personal traits such as empathy, extraversion, strong leadership support, and practical training, are vital organisational factors that nurture customer orientation. Numerous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of customer orientation, linking it to outcomes such as heightened customer satisfaction (Gonu et al., 2023), increased customer loyalty (Homburg et al., 2011), and enhanced organisational performance (Jeong et al., 2014).

The development and upkeep of strong customer relationships are now critical priorities in business management, as they significantly impact business income, strategy, and marketing. Sales teams play a central role in customer relationship management by nurturing customer relationships through tailored value propositions (Le Meunier-Fitzhugh et al., 2011; Piercy et al., 2009).

We use the definition of Customer Orientation provided by Xia and Ha (2021), which refers to a specific set of activities aimed at identifying, analysing, understanding, and responding to customer needs. Although Customer Orientation has been applied to various sectors and has evolved, it remains true to its origins in the marketing literature, first introduced within the sales context by Saxe and Weitz, (1982). Firstly, it was seen as the extent to which a salesperson applies the marketing concept by helping customers make informed purchasing decisions. Secondly, it encompasses the degree to which the salesperson gathers and analyses competitive intelligence to refine offerings and anticipate market shifts Thirdly, it reflects the level of inter-functional coordination—how effectively the salesperson shares customer insights with other departments to tailor solutions. Finally, it involves a long-term relationship orientation, prioritizing sustained engagement, trust-building, and customer retention over one-off transactions (Saxe and Weitz, 1982; Franke and Park, 2006). The goal remains to build long-lasting and mutually beneficial customer relationships by continuously seeking their satisfaction (Franke and Park, 2006; Saxe and Weitz, 1982).

In recent years, customer orientation has significantly enriched sales research by pushing the boundaries of new concepts. It has been recognized as a sales method, approach, behaviour, salesperson characteristic, communication factor, precursor of job attitudes or performance, dimension of customer trust, and performance measure (Schwepker, 2003). In their 2002 study, Rentz et al. highlighted the importance of individual skills for efficient job performance. These skills include interpersonal relationship competencies (such as verbal and nonverbal communication), sales presentation, and technical competencies. Therefore, organisations should focus on the attitudes and

behaviours of their salespersons, as these factors influence customer satisfaction and ultimately impact organisational performance, according to Ahearne et al. research in 2010.

Inherent in adopting Customer-Oriented behaviours is the ability to adapt to the situation in which the sale occurs. Adaptation to the selling situation will translate into efficiency in the sales process. By adjusting the communication style and its persuasive techniques—i.e., Adaptive Selling—salespersons can get better results by interacting with the customer. Customers expect firms to be customer-oriented and to exchange information (Swan et al., 2002). Due to the complexity of the purchasing process, clients with a greater need for information will tend to value salespersons' customer-oriented behaviours. Consequently, Salespersons' actions in the sales process are based on establishing or maintaining relationships based on nuclear elements such as Trust, Commitment, Satisfaction, and Long-term Guidance (Jaakkola et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2018).

Marketing orientation models have definitively emphasized the necessity of taking a systematic approach to communication among stakeholders. This can involve increased proximity between sales teams and their customers and implementing partnership-building and engagement strategies that demand higher levels of professionalism. Each salesperson holds a privileged position in reaching target markets by adopting proactive behaviours that can improve performance more easily (Franke and Park, 2006; Szarucki and Menet, 2018; Terho et al., 2015). Wachner et al. (2009) state that Customer Orientation is not simply a marketing philosophy or a sales strategy. It is a behaviour that requires specific skills to generate an adequate return on performance.

Furthermore, the core meaning of Customer Orientation has acquired different meanings over time. This is of utmost importance to our work since how Customer Orientation is applied can result in different outcomes. The effectiveness of Customer Orientation is not universal. Some studies (Peillon, et al., 2018; Rod and Ashill, 2015) have focused their research on the effecacy of CO, mainly in salespersons' performance and in healthcare professionals' performance. However, in sales contexts, customers have a word to say when setting the tone for the negotiation. Different customers may need different approaches from the same salesperson, and the same customer may need different selling approaches at different times. The salesperson may adopt a customer-oriented attitude (and COB) in certain situations. In contrast, in others, merely being of a transactional kind may require a sales-oriented attitude (and consequently sales-oriented behaviour).

Therefore, there is indubitably agreement that Customer-Oriented Attitudes will drive Customer-Oriented Behaviours in the long term and shape customers' perceptions of Value Creation and Customer Satisfaction (Darta et al., 2020).

Prior research has highlighted the crucial role that salespeople play in terms of Customer Orientation. As the primary connection between the company and its customers, salespeople are critical in addressing customer needs during the sales process. As a result, they are a vital asset in embodying a company's emphasis on customer centricity, a dedication that is clearly evident to the customer (Habel et al., 2020).

In this sense, several authors (Hohenschwert, 2012; Jaakkola et al., 2015; Schwepker, 2003) state that there are innumerable attitudes that salespersons can put into practice when interacting with customers that may result in higher levels of performance and customer satisfaction in the long term. These attitudes are diversified but include fulfilling commitments, sales follow-up, total availability to solve problems, solving and follow-up claims, and creating value. These proactive attitudes extended beyond merely presenting tailored solutions to customers' specific needs or satisfying them.

Effective salespersons must properly and efficiently question the customer to discover needs, tailor the offer by presenting a solution to those specific needs and communicate its benefits and value to the customer. Customer Orientation is, therefore, considered a characteristic of effective salespersons and the key to their success.

Based on this, it is hypothesized that:

H7: Customer Orientation is positively related to Value Co-creation in real estate salespersons.

2.4.1. The mediating Role of Customer Orientation on Job Burnout - Value Co-Creation Relationship

Although Customer Orientation has garnered attention from scholars over the years, research indicates the need to better understand its role as “an important leverage for Service-based organisations (Xia and Ha, 2021, p. 5). Consolidating the main drivers of Customer Orientation on individuals and the outcomes that may derive from it is still a long path (Kang et al., 2016).

We have considered that burnout can harm the customer orientation levels of salespersons. This is because salespersons face job burnout due to the unique nature of their role, dealing with customer complaints, concerns, and the disappointment of unsuccessful deals. Salespeople also play a crucial role in building strong customer relationships by demonstrating behaviours and attitudes influencing customers' perceptions of service quality and organisational performance (Babakus et al., 2009).

Nevertheless, sales personnel are expected to regulate their emotions by suppressing negative emotions and enhancing positive ones to engage in lengthy and fruitful customer interactions. In individuals with personality traits conducive to customer-oriented behaviours, burnout is reduced by minimizing the need for employees to fake their emotions (Darta et al., 2020).

According to Schwepker's seminal study in 2003, high levels of customer orientation can help reduce role stress. However, the relationship between Customer Orientation and Role Stress must still be fully understood. Further research is needed to examine the connection between Customer Orientation, Burnout, and how salespersons utilize Customer Orientation.

Customer-oriented “acting” is supposed to originate from Burnout, and we believe that Burnout will inhibit or negatively influence customer-oriented behaviour, incredibly demanding and specific tasks that are usually involved in the value-creation process (Babakus et al., 2009; Darta et al., 2020).

Supposing Customer Orientation is a behavioural skill that allows salespersons to act on behalf of customers' needs and satisfaction. In that case, sales managers should recruit emotionally stable individuals who are fully committed to their jobs. In addition, organisations should foster a customer-oriented culture by creating a customer-centric (Customer needs first) atmosphere that will lead to job demand mitigation (Rod and Ashill, 2015).

The Customer Orientation literature points out different approaches to Customer Orientation practice, as follows:

- Customer Orientation Attitude (COA) refers to the emotions that sales professionals experience when interacting with customers. Emotions such as pleasure, personal satisfaction, affinity, or interest are effective interactions (Darta et al., 2020).
- Customer Orientation Behaviour (COB) is the effective acquisition of knowledge from customer needs, leading to value creation through a thorough understanding of their preferences (Saxe and Weitz, 1982; Wang and Chang, 2016).
- Functional Customer Orientation: Salespersons identify needs, explaining and recommending products to customers (Shu et al., 2019);
- Relational Customer Orientation: Salespersons act as friends, building personal customer relationships (Shu et al., 2019).

It is crucial to comprehend the connection between attitudes and behaviours as various factors can impact them. While attitudes can predict behaviour, they do not always do so perfectly due to external influences, situational factors, and individual characteristics. Understanding the complexities of this relationship is essential for research (Stock and Hoyer, 2005). These authors defend that COA and COB directly impact customer satisfaction and consider COA to be the main driver for COB. We believe that emphasizing only the cost of business (COB) as the sole factor for creating value can be misleading. This is because the salesperson may only be partially dedicated to their customers. It's essential to focus on understanding the current and future needs of the customers, as well as shaping their emotional connections to create real value.

It is widely recognized in the literature that Customer Orientation can act as a buffer against Burnout (Babakus et al., 2009; Darta et al., 2020; Rod and Ashill, 2015). Customer Orientation acts as a coping mechanism that will enhance individuals' attitudinal and behavioural responses towards job demands, reducing feelings of Burnout in all its subdimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment (Rod and Ashill, 2015).

The evidence from the literature shows that focusing on customers significantly impacts burnout. Customer Orientation A (COA) and Customer Orientation B (COB) help professionals control their emotions when dealing with customers because they are affected by their feelings (Wang and Chang, 2016). However, there is an evident lack of understanding about the significant damage a salesperson's emotional state (burnout) can inflict on Customer Orientation. Due to the stressful nature of sales jobs, salespersons are susceptible to losing functional and emotional resources (Shu et al., 2019).

Expanding on the principles of Customer Orientation by Saxe and Weitz (1982) and Schwepker (2003), it is essential to emphasize its conceptual foundation, the need for timely response, active engagement in customer interactions, and the dedication to understanding unique customer needs to offer valuable solutions. Customer Orientation is viewed as an "employee tendency and predisposition" (Schwepker, 2003, p. 152) to fulfil customer needs. Some studies suggest that job involvement is linked to emotional labour, potentially mediated by job burnout, highlighting how high emotional demands can lead to exhaustion and reduced job satisfaction (e.g., Wang and Chang, 2016). Additionally, previous studies identified job involvement as a predictor of burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

While conceptual and related empirical models generally assume that Customer Orientation influences Burnout, we propose that Burnout can affect employees' belief in their ability to satisfy customer needs or their enjoyment of interacting with customers (see Saxe and Weitz, 1982).

Furthermore, the dual-concern theory states that salespersons interact with customers according to two main focuses: (a) a self-concern focus that depends on the salesperson's own interests during customer interaction; (b)The other concern is the evident outcome derived from Customer Orientation, meaning the predisposition to meet customer needs, representing the Customer Orientation praxis initially stated by Saxe and Weitz (Kassemeier et al., 2022).

It is indisputable in research on the role of salespersons' customer-oriented behaviours in customer value creation (Kassemeier et al., 2022). Nevertheless, customers demand increasing levels of adaptation and consultative selling approaches, which require more profound levels of information sharing and knowledge generation management from salespersons. Such processes require higher individual resource consumption from salespersons to meet perceived customer value (Singh and Koshy, 2011). These customized demanding solutions require extensive coordination of internal resources and in-depth customer information that may represent some degree of incompatibility between customer needs and firm offerings, which may result in role conflict (Lawrence et al., 2021).

Other studies have found that enhancing COA in employees will generate higher levels of stability in behaviour over time, raising awareness for the importance of instilling proactive attitudes on desired COB (e.g., Reychav and Weisberg, 2009).

Departing from the literature, we posit that burnout may influence the salesperson's ability to manifest customer-oriented behaviours due to the damaging emotional morale the salesperson may be experiencing. The lack of empathy will neutralize the need and enjoyment of fulfilling customers' needs and wants, resulting in a damaging relationship with their customers and its value Co-Creation (Taylor

et al., 2019). Nevertheless, attention has been neglected in the literature to measure burnout on COA correctly.

We agree with Reychav and Weisberg's (2009) perspective that attitudes can be affected by conative, cognitive and affective components and are more stable over time. Behavioural customer orientation is subject to more significant fluctuations over time due to organisational-related, contextual or customer factors (Stock and Hoyer, 2005).

Moreover, literature on salesperson customer orientation has found mixed results, only sometimes resulting in higher job outcomes. Some studies call for considering salesperson sales resources to fuel a customer orientation mindset (Shu et al., 2019).

The literature must be more comprehensive in portraying the individual factors influencing salespersons engaging in Customer Orientation efforts (Flaherty et al., 1999). Furthermore, salespersons dealing with Role Stress (Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict) decrease their effort in work-related tasks, have less time and energy for Job Involvement (Customer Orientation Outcome), work motivation and the ability to engage in Customer Orientation selling (Flaherty et al., 1999). Moreover, Role Ambiguity and Role conflict have significantly impacted Job Burnout (Wu et al., 2019).

A study by Kang et al. (2016), analysed the potential negative influence of Occupational Burnout on Job Stress and Customer Orientation. According to these authors, occupational burnout is represented by emotional depletion, impersonal anger, and decreased desire for accomplishment. In sum, it translates into lower interest in work and customers and a need for more confidence in performing the job. Against all predictions, Occupational Burnout alone had no direct negative effect on Customer Orientation, but it had a significant effect on Job Stress, which, in turn, negatively impacted Customer Orientation (Kang et al., 2016). This study's results highlight the importance of mediation effects in the relationship between burnout and Customer Orientation. One reason for these results may be the employee-customer interaction environment that hotel services organisations provide to expedite work through a customer-oriented priority approach.

Following this reasoning, we state the following hypothesis:

H8: Customer orientation mediates the relationship of job burnout on value co-creation in real estate salespersons.

Empirical Investigation

III.

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

In this chapter, the conceptual model that will guide the present research is proposed. Specifically, the aim is to investigate WFC, FWC and Job Burnout and their effect on the performance of the Real Estate Salespeople, specifically on their Value Co-Creation behaviours. The research hypotheses that support this model are also presented and justified.

3.1. Model and Research Hypothesis

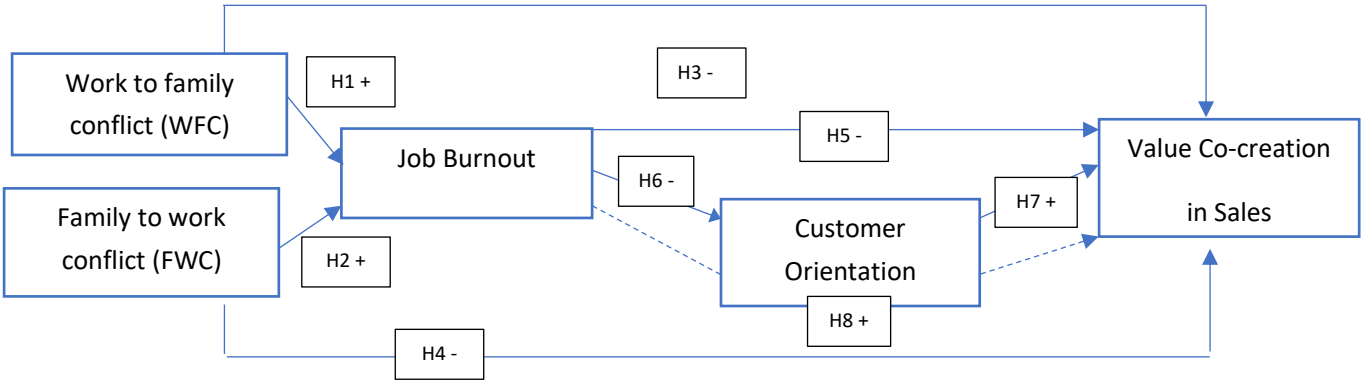
3.1.1. Proposed Model

The following chapter proposes a theoretical model to demonstrate the conceptual basis for investigating the constructs of Work-Family Conflict, Family Work Conflict, Job Burnout, Customer Orientation, and Value Co-Creation.

This model (Figure 3) assumes that WFC and FWC have a negative effect on the Value Creation process. On the other hand, we argue that WFC and FWC have both a positive impact (or influence) on Job Burnout, which, in turn, has a negative impact on Value Creation. This analysis goes further by maintaining that the Job Burnout–value Creation Process is mediated by Customer Orientation.

We will analyse various constructs that incorporate the theoretical model, and the research hypotheses subsequently presented.

Figure 3: Proposed Model



Source: Own Elaboration

The proposed model integrates five focal constructs—Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC), Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC), Job Burnout, Customer Orientation (CO), and Value Co-creation (VCC)—and specifies directional relations among them (Figure 3).

Hypotheses are organized into conceptual blocks for clarity purposes only, but the full model is estimated simultaneously using PLS-SEM (SmartPLS); the mediation is tested via bootstrapped indirect effects within PLS-SEM and replicated with a regression-based robustness check (PROCESS, Model 4).

Direct Relationships

Conflict → Burnout

H1. WFC is positively related to Job Burnout.

H2. FWC is positively related to Job Burnout.

Conflict → Value Co-creation

H3. WFC is negatively related to Value Co-creation.

H4. FWC is negatively related to Value Co-creation.

Burnout → Value Co-creation and Customer Orientation

H5. Job Burnout is negatively related to Value Co-creation.

H6. Job Burnout is negatively related to Customer Orientation.

Customer Orientation → Value Co-creation

H7. Customer Orientation is positively related to Value Co-creation.

Indirect Relationships

Burnout → Customer Orientation → Value Co-creation (Mediation)

H8. Customer Orientation mediates the relationship between Job Burnout and Value Co-creation, such that the indirect effect of Job Burnout on Value Co-creation via Customer Orientation is negative.

In line with the structural model, we hypothesize that Customer Orientation mediates the relationship between Job Burnout and Value Co-creation, such that higher Burnout lowers Customer Orientation, which in turn reduces Value Co-creation (i.e., a negative indirect effect: Burnout → CO → VCC). The indirect effect will be estimated in PLS-SEM (SmartPLS) with 5,000 bootstrapped 95% confidence

intervals (mediation supported when the CI excludes zero and, for this directional hypothesis, lies below zero), and replicated with PROCESS (Model 4) as a robustness check.

By doing so, we strongly believe we will provide a more comprehensive analysis of how personal and professional challenges can influence sales outcomes. Addressing these factors is essential for understanding the effect that employee personal well-being has on organisational performance, particularly in the commercial context.

3.2. Underlying Assumptions for the study

Assumptions are the conditions (or factors) that researchers believe to be true in the context of a study. Providing assumptions serves as the foundation upon which the research is built, as several conditions are taken for granted by researchers when conducting the study (Delin, 1994). These assumptions provide the foundational context for the research and guide the interpretation of findings and limitations within the specific context of the Portuguese Real Estate sector.

1) We have assumed that, in average, the salespersons within the Portuguese real estate sector (real estate agents), share certain common characteristics, such as job roles, working conditions (e.g. stress) and industry-specific factors such as the favorable contextual environment concerning real estate sales in Portugal. Therefore, we assume a certain homogeneity of the Portuguese real estate working conditions.

2) During the research and data collection period (which began on 30/04/2023 and ended on 23/06/2023), we assumed that the real estate market remained relatively stable. Nevertheless, political and social instability associated with the house renting market has created a general disbelief in the population to buy and/or rent. Despite the fact that the interest rates are continuously increasing, it did not seem to have an impact on overall buying-selling dynamics. It did not have significant fluctuations (or changes) in the market that could influence the study's outcomes.

3) Cultural Factors: We acknowledge that cultural factors may influence work-family dynamics, customer orientation, and value co-creation behaviours. This study primarily focuses on the

Portuguese cultural context, and while insights may be relevant to similar cultural contexts, generalizability to different cultural settings may be limited.

4) We assume that survey respondents provided honest and accurate responses to our survey instruments. Efforts have been made to ensure the confidentiality of responses to encourage truthful reporting ensuring response honesty. We have considered that respondents have a strong and real interest in the results of this study (Fox et al., 2010). In addition, informed consent was obtained, and privacy was maintained during data collection and analysis, ensuring research ethical conduct;

5) We have recognized that the research design is primarily correlational and while associations may be identified between variables, causation is not assumed. Therefore, further research is needed to establish causal relationships, namely, additional longitudinal or experimental research to establish causality assumption.

6) We have also assumed the Consistency of Organisational Support, given that the concept of Work-Family Conflict remains somewhat unrecognized and vague regarding organisational support, policies, and best practices among Portuguese real estate firms. Therefore, the practices related to work-family balance remain relatively consistent within the sampled real estate firms.

7) The multi-item instruments approximate the intended latent constructs. Items were adapted from established scales, pretested, and (where applicable) reverse-coded. In PLS-SEM we evaluate reliability and validity (indicator loadings, CR/ρA/α, AVE, HTMT) to substantiate this assumption empirically.

8) We have also made statistical assumptions (SEM). Observations are independent; missing data were handled appropriately; 7-point Likert indicators are treated as approximately continuous for composite-based estimation; and the sample size is adequate for the model's complexity, as reflected in stable bootstrap estimates and standard PLS-SEM diagnostics.

3.3. Summary of the Research Hypothesis

Following the previous analysis, a Table summarizes the hypothesis tested is presented /Table number 6):

Table 7 - Summary of the Research Hypothesis

H1	WFC is positively related to Job Burnout among Real Estate salespersons.
H2	FWC is positively related to Job Burnout among Real Estate salespersons.
H3	WFC is negatively related to Value Co-creation in the Real Estate sector.
H4	FWC is negatively related to Value Co-creation in the Real Estate sector.
H5	Job Burnout is negatively related to Value Co-creation in the Real Estate Sector.
H6	Job Burnout is negatively related to Customer Orientation among Real Estate salespersons.
H7	Customer Orientation is positively related to Value Co-creation among Real Estate Salespersons.
H8	Customer Orientation mediates the relationship of Job Burnout on Value Co-creation among Real Estate Salespersons (indirect effect < 0).

Source: Own Elaboration

IV.

4. METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, the conceptual model of thesis is presented. Also, the research hypotheses that derived from the relevant literature review are explicitly summarized. The purpose of this chapter is to present and describe the methodological choices and clarify the research strategy and procedures adopted in this investigation.

This chapter outlines the methodological approach aligned with the ontological and epistemological positions. To do so, it begins with a presentation of the research context, which includes an introduction to the importance of the Real Estate sector for the Portuguese Economic situation as well as its contribution to the national GDP. Following this, the research paradigm is presented, along with the research design that outlines the structure of the research process. Finally, the data collection and analysis procedures are discussed in detail.

4.1. Context of Research: The Real Estate Case Study in Portugal

The real estate market dynamics analysis has gained particular interest in recent years following the collapse of the subprime market in the United States of America. The consequences of this collapse quickly became widespread throughout the rest of the world and caused significant impacts on the global economy. Therefore, understanding the various dimensions of real estate markets is extremely important, to anticipate their potential effects on the Portuguese economy and facilitate the definition of housing policies suitable for modern societies.

The real estate market affects the economy in the short term in two main ways. On the one hand, it shows that unexpected events in the housing market, particularly in housing prices and mortgage credit, spread to the rest of the economy, especially by causing crises in the financial sector and depressing household consumption and investment. On the other hand, the characteristics of the housing market, namely the percentage of mortgage contracts with variable interest rates and the percentage of families that have a low level of liquidity but own their home, among others, amplify the impact of aggregate shocks on the economy originating in the real estate sector.

This interdependence between real estate activity and other economic sectors, such as tourism, commerce, retail, and industry, makes it a fundamental sector: a growing real estate sector certainly reinforces the favourable global economic context, and, on the contrary, a real estate crisis is likely to contribute to a slowdown in economic activity (Reichenbach et al., 2019).

The real estate sector represents one of the primary and most solid pillars of the Portuguese economy, with 16,8% of the country's GDP (IMPIC, 2022), being responsible for both direct and indirect job generation (a total of 6,2% of the Portuguese economy according with the 2022 IMPIC Report). The contribution to the Portuguese GDP has been diminishing over the years, reflecting the loss of residential investment, which had a relative weight of 25% in 2001 (Rodrigues et al., 2022). Therefore, the real estate sector plays a significant role in Portugal for several reasons:

Economic Contribution: The real estate sector substantially contributes to Portugal's economy by generating employment opportunities, both directly and indirectly, through construction, property management, and related services (Correia and Ribeiro, 2022). Additionally, real estate transactions contribute to tax revenues, stimulating economic growth and development (Lourenço and Rodrigues, 2017).

Investment Opportunities: Portugal's real estate market has become increasingly attractive to domestic and international investors. The country offers a favourable investment climate, affordable property prices, a stable political environment, and a growing tourism sector. This has led to a surge in foreign direct investment, boosting the economy and creating new business opportunities (Correia and Ribeiro, 2022).

Tourism and Hospitality: Portugal is a popular tourist destination known for its beautiful landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and pleasant climate. The real estate sector supports the tourism industry by providing accommodation options such as hotels, resorts, vacation rentals, and second homes. The revenue generated from tourism-related real estate contributes significantly to the country's overall economic performance (Wisniewski, 2022).

Urban Development and Infrastructure: The real estate sector is crucial in urban development and infrastructure improvement. It drives the construction of residential, commercial, and mixed-use properties, contributing to urban revitalization and enhancing the overall quality of life. Real estate projects often incorporate essential infrastructure components like transportation networks, utilities, and public spaces, further supporting sustainable urban growth.

Housing Market: The availability of affordable and quality housing is a critical factor in societal well-being. The real estate sector in Portugal addresses the population's housing needs, facilitating homeownership and rental opportunities. It plays a crucial role in urban planning, ensuring the provision of adequate housing options for various income levels and demographic groups (IMPIC, 2022).

Overall, the real estate sector's importance in Portugal stems from its significant economic impact, investment potential, role in tourism development, contribution to urban growth, and addressing housing needs. It is a crucial driver of economic prosperity and supports the country's overall development.

Considering the critical role of the real estate sector in the economy, both within Portugal and globally, the recent trends in this sector have raised alarms. The sector's current state has prompted Portuguese government agencies to initiate a suite of public policy measures aimed at transforming, rejuvenating, and redirecting the industry to enhance its competitiveness sustainably. This intervention has become increasingly necessary due to the rise in housing prices to levels never seen before, complicating the home-buying process for numerous Portuguese families. Furthermore, the rental market has experienced a significant price uptick, exacerbating the situation. These developments have resulted in widespread difficulties among the population in securing housing, highlighting the urgent need for

effective policy responses to address these challenges and ensure that the real estate sector can meet the needs of the country's citizens equitably and sustainably.

Between 2015 and 2019, the total number of housing transactions increased consecutively, experiencing its first decrease in 2020, due to imposed conditions from COVID-19. In 2021, 165,682 homes were transacted, setting a new record and marking a growth of 20.5% compared to 2020. By categories, existing homes accounted for the majority of transactions, with 138,088, compared to 27,594 transactions of new homes. The value of homes transacted in 2021 reached 28.1 billion euros, an increase of 31.1% from 2020. Of the total, 21.6 billion euros corresponded to transactions of existing homes (a 34.2% increase relative to 2020) and 6.5 billion euros to new homes (a 21.7% increase) (Housing Observatory, 2023).

In the following table it is listed the number of houses sold in the Portuguese market since 2015 (Table number 7):

Table 8 - Number of houses sold in Portugal since 2015

Year	Existing	New	Total
2015	70512	19997	90509
2016	87304	20186	107490
2017	107486	22347	129833
2018	126300	24909	151209
2019	130622	24243	154865
2020	113069	24444	137513
2021	138088	27594	165682

Source: (Housing Observatory, 2023)

In 2022 a total of 167800 houses were sold, maintaining the rising trend since 2020. But, from July to September in the third quarter of 2022, 42,223 homes were sold, which is a decrease of 2.8% compared to the same period in 2021. This marks the first year-on-year transaction reduction since the first quarter of 2021. Out of the total transactions, 34,627 were for existing homes. For new homes, transactions saw an increase of 3.3%, totalling 7,596 units (Housing Observatory, 2023).

The total value of housing transactions in the third quarter of 2022 amounted to 8.1 billion euros, representing an increase of 9.6% compared to the same quarter of 2021. This figure represents a significant financial volume within the real estate sector, reflecting both the economic impact of housing sales and the ongoing interest in property investment despite the observed decrease in transactions. The shift in transaction numbers, particularly the rise in sales of new homes, may indicate changing consumer preferences or market dynamics, such as the introduction of new housing developments or shifts in the economic landscape affecting buyers' choices (Bank of Portugal, 2024).

The housing market, a vital component of the economy, is closely monitored by analysts and policymakers due to its direct influence on economic health and capacity to reflect broader economic trends.

4.2. Research Methodology

This section explains the grounds of the research and its philosophy. It presents a detailed description of the procedures utilized to grasp the research objectives, which means that this chapter presents the analytic procedures employed to achieve the research objectives and to test the proposed hypotheses, thereby constituting the empirical core of the thesis. Additionally, the objective of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive account of the meticulous planning that shaped the investigation. This includes elucidating the process of defining the gathered information, acquiring the sources, and detailing how they were obtained. Furthermore, the measurement scales employed in this study are also explained.

4.3. The Choice of a Research Paradigm

A paradigm is a "conceptual framework within which a researcher may work" (Sobh and Perry, 2006, pp. 1194).

The methodology is the action plan which supports the choice and use of the methods applied to the empirical research, explaining "why, what, from where, when, and how" data is collected and analysed (Scotland, 2012, p. 9).

Engaging in any form of research is only possible with being committed to an ontological and epistemological positioning. Researchers differ in what concerns their ontological and epistemological positioning, often leading to different research approaches towards the same phenomenon (Scotland, 2012).

The choice regarding our research paradigm is linked to the Ontological and Epistemological positioning of the researcher towards his/her research. Ontology is concerned with how we perceive the nature of our reality or existence, considering an objective versus subjective view. It is fundamental for delimiting the research problem (Wahyuni, 2012). It is, therefore, aligned with the definition of epistemology (Scotland, 2012), involving the process of creating knowledge and our beliefs about how knowledge is built, that is, a more positivist view of reality vs a more interpretative one (Saccol, 2009).

Essentially, ontology is "reality", epistemology is the relationship between that reality and the researcher, and methodology is the techniques or methods used to discover that reality (Sobh and Perry, 2006).

This section will specify how to collect and analyse data relevant to this study. The data collected will be quantitative, as quantitative researchers use numbers and large samples to conduct their tests.

In order to acknowledge the established beliefs in this field of research, it becomes necessary to refer to the prevailing theoretical positions and the different worldviews. In other words, it is imperative to determine the paradigms in which researchers position themselves regarding reality (Gareth, 1980).

- Constructivism and Interpretative Paradigm

On the opposite ontological side of Positivism is the Social Constructivist or Interpretative paradigm, where reality is a more subjective concept. Reality remains unknowable because there is no way to

reach out for it directly, as it will never be independent of the mind or consciousness of the person observing it (Thietart, 2001). It is apprehended by the action of the subject who is experiencing it. Therefore, reality cannot be known objectively but only through the mind of the person who is addressing it (Scotland, 2012; Sobh and Perry, 2006; Wahyuni, 2012). Hence, the assumptions formulated can only be, by nature, phenomenological and connected to the context of the research in opposition to the ontological objectivity advocated by the Positivists (Thietart, 2001).

- Realist Paradigm:

There is growing attention supporting the Realist paradigm in management research. It defends that reality exists and is independent of the researcher's mind (Sobh and Perry, 2006). However, the reality is happening, and the researchers are autonomous in their perception of the objects and structures composing that reality. Realist researchers believe that the reality they apprehend is independent and immune to their thoughts and opinions of that reality. Nevertheless, they assume that reality can have multiple meanings and understandings according to the research subjects, in opposition to the Positivist paradigm.

- Positivist Paradigm:

The Positivist Paradigm is the most widely used paradigm for marketing research (Brennan et al., 2011). Its main philosophical belief is that reality can be measured by viewing it without any interference from the researcher (Sobh and Perry, 2006). It resides solely in an objective reality and not in the conscience of the researcher. Thus, the researcher aims to obtain research results through positivist statements that are descriptive and factual, constituting the scientific paradigm foundation founded on data and facts (Scotland, 2012). Therefore, it is found in the literature that the positivist paradigm is based on a realistic ontology and considers an objectivist epistemology; that is, it presupposes that researchers objectively build knowledge and that the reality "is out there, waiting for us to discover it" (Saccol, 2009). According to the positivist paradigm, knowledge creation involves deductive logic, meaning that previous knowledge must be complemented by gaps or unanswered questions (Kankam, 2019). Every concept must be clearly defined and transformed into one or more variables that can be observed and measured objectively.
Our research will adopt the Positivism paradigm using a quantitative data-gathering method.

4.4. Research Design

4.4.1. Quantitative: The Questionnaire Design

This part of the research aimed to test the proposed conceptual model empirically. Following the literature review, the questionnaire is the most developed method of collecting primary data in management research. A survey (or questionnaire) enables researchers to question individuals. Therefore, its main strength as a primary data-collecting approach is its versatility (Cooper and Schindler, 2013). Quantitative methods, like a questionnaire, allow the researcher to work with large samples and to establish correlational relationships or statistical comparisons. Collecting data by survey involves three major steps: 1) initial crafting of the questionnaire and choosing scales, 2) pre-testing of the survey to check the validity and reliability of the measurement scales, and then 3) administering of the final questionnaire (Thietart, 2001).

In our study, the survey will be used as a research method to develop a descriptive research design. It will clarify the association between the constructs that compose the research model. Descriptive research is built around deductive hypotheses and describes a phenomenon associated with a given population, with possibilities to make inferences and discover possible associations between different variables.

Therefore, by using the online questionnaire, valuable information was collected that enabled us to access the perspectives, ideas, and attitudes of real estate agents. The unit of analysis of the study is the perceived emotional state in the context of real estate selling activity, from north to south of Portugal, experienced by real estate agents.

A questionnaire must follow a set of steps to be conducted properly. The steps to conduct a questionnaire are illustrated below in Table number 8:

Table 9 - Questionnaire Guidelines

Steps	Description
Goal Setting	The main objectives of the questionnaire should be clear and concise so that they can be understood and thus facilitate the process as a whole.
Target Population	The population should be carefully defined as it is from the population that the sample will be established
Structure	It is the stage that evaluates the population to derive the sample; that is, it represents the elements of the target population.
Sampling	It consists of defining the type of sampling, whether probabilistic or non-probabilistic. The sample must have enough elements to provide the information needed to achieve the objectives
Measurement Methods	Deciding which method to employ involves interviews, questionnaires sent by email or regular mail, or even direct observations.
Measurement Instruments	The instrument should be constructed in such a way as to avoid bias and misunderstandings and minimize the lack of responses.
Data Collection	The person responsible for the application of the instruments can influence the behaviour of the respondents, so it is necessary to know the procedure as a whole.
Pre-test	The pre-test is considered crucial because it enables the identification of whether the instrument is compatible with the objectives if there are any problems in data collection, and even in the collection plan.
Collection	It consists of the practical part, where the researcher meets with the respondents face-to-face or by other means.
Data Organisation	After the data has been collected, it is necessary to organize it. It is also essential to analyse whether data is missing and whether some respondents need to be

	discarded, either due to a lack of data or incorrect completion.
Data Analysis	After tabulation of the data, it is necessary to analyse the data by choosing the statistical technique to be used, which depends on the question and objectives of the research.

Source: (Scheaffer, Mendenhall III, 2012)

We intended that the questionnaire was sent directly to the Real Estate Agencies all over Portugal and directly to the ASMIP (Associação dos Mediadores do Imobiliário de Portugal) who, in turn, sponsored this research by recognizing its importance and meaning to the Real Estate Sector. From our perspective, an approved and sponsored study with the support of ASMIP would lend significant importance to our research and capture the respondents' attention. Therefore, a meeting with ASMIP Vice President Mr. Francisco Bacelar took place on the 28th of April 2023 at 11:00 am, where the research goals were presented to establish the protocol with the association.

A brief explanation of the study's purposes and outcomes is provided at the beginning of the questionnaire. The complete questionnaire is in the Appendix section of this thesis.

> *This questionnaire is part of an investigation within the scope of the PhD in Marketing and Strategy at the University of Minho.*
> *Completing the questionnaire will take approximately 8 minutes. Responses are* ***anonymous*** *and* ***confidential****, used only for this academic research and for no other purpose. The quality of this work depends on the sincerity of your answers.*
> *By answering this questionnaire, you declare that you give voluntary informed consent to your participation and authorize the use of your answers for ongoing research.*
> *Thank you for your availability and cooperation.*

Furthermore, with the purpose of providing a clarification of the research's objectives and minimizing the risk of biased responses from the questionnaire, a research description was provided together with an invitation to answer the questionnaire. The invitation to all participants was made directly to the electronic general address of Remax, Era, and Century 21 real estate agencies from the northern to the southern part of the country. Following Cooper and Schindler, (2013), using the Internet as the elected communication channel, an increased geographic coverage can be met at a fraction of the cost and

time required compared to other sources of questionnaires (Observation for example). Below, a sample of the email is provided:

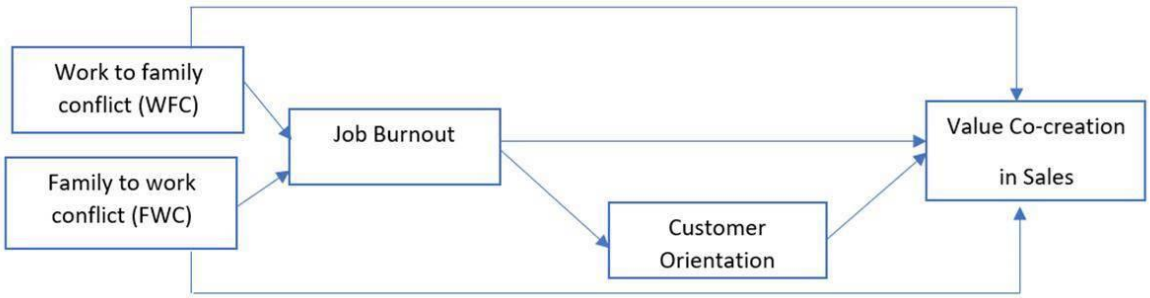
Good morning,

My name is Simão Machado, and I am finishing my PhD thesis on the real estate sector and the emotional health of real estate consultants.

This is a pioneering study carried out in Portugal with the collaboration of ASMIP. You can answer the questionnaire through the QR code or link below. The study aims to assess the emotional state of real estate consultants in Portugal, and the results will help companies explore good practices for managing their consultants' emotional intelligence.

>> As a way of contextualizing the study, I will now dedicate a few words about the general idea of the project <<

In short, the theoretical model will seek to demonstrate a conceptual basis for the investigation: Work-Family Conflict (Stress generated by work causes), Family-Work Conflict (Stress generated by personal causes), Burnout, Customer Orientation (a trait of personality), and the Co-creation of Value in the real estate context.



The questionnaire will be available online through a link or QR Code and consists of only 35 questions. Real Estate Agents must answer from 1 to 7 to determine how much they identify with each question's proposition. The answers are completely anonymous, and the data collected by these questionnaires will not be processed for any purpose other than statistical treatment to realize the Thesis.

It takes about 7 to 8 minutes to respond.

To access, people simply click on the link below or on the attached QR Code:

https://forms.gle/9i5nPH29YV8xuqqp7



As mentioned before, asking questions is, above all, a device for measuring concepts and constructs. Nevertheless, the answers alone, which measure attitudes or opinions towards the research subject, may not provide value to the researchers if the measurement scales used do not match the research goals (Taherdoost, 2021).

The questionnaire using Likert Scales is the most widely used data-gathering method. The Likert scales are used to rate the statements that express, favourable or unfavourable attitudes towards a research topic or subject. These scales are more reliable and provide a greater volume of data than many other scales, producing interval data (Cooper and Schindler, 2013).

Following the authors' rationale, this type of scale intends the respondent to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement regarding statements related to the attitude or the subject of research.

The questionnaire used in this research also included demographic data regarding the respondents' sex, age, work experience, and company size, among other information. It will be an extensive questionnaire as it will cover four major concepts of the model: WFC/FWC, Burnout, Customer Orientation, and Value Co-creation.

4.4.2. Questionnaire Pre-Test / Pilot Study

A pre-test is a preliminary assessment or pilot study conducted before the main study to refine and readjust wording and instruments, among other things (Scheaffer et al., 2012). It helps researchers identify and address potential issues or challenges that may arise during the main study. Throughout the pre-test implementation, we hope to provide a clear and detailed idea of its purpose as well as the insights gained by applying it.

According to Forsyth et al. (2004), pretesting methods are techniques used to evaluate and refine research instruments before implementing them in a study with the purpose of clarity and increased effectiveness. Some pretesting methodologies include informal expert review, appraisal of questionnaire forms, and cognitive interviewing.

- Informal Expert Review: This involves seeking feedback from experts who are knowledgeable in the research field, whether in the use of methodologies, research instruments, or design.
- Questionnaire Forms Appraisal: This methodology helps researchers evaluate the questionnaire's clarity, formatting, and layout, providing important feedback on the questionnaire's structure.
- Cognitive Interviewing: in-depth interviews are conducted with potential respondents to understand how the questionnaire questions are processed and interpreted.

By employing these pretesting methods, we could reinforce the content and face validity of the research instruments, assuming a more accurate and reliable measure (Presser et al., 2004).

For this research, we used Informal Expert Review and Questionnaire Forms Appraisal. The first method was of utmost importance because it allowed us to gain valuable insights from nine (9) experts. Seven (7) experts were consulted from the field of research methodologies, along with two (2) sales professionals who possess leadership expertise and extensive experience. Additionally, through the informal expert review, we were able to identify potential shortcomings and ambiguities in the questionnaire, which we subsequently addressed during the questionnaire forms appraisal phase such as:

- refinements on demographics questions like "number of children", "school degree" and "gender",
- questionnaire's presentation and introduction: an expert stated that "*in order to keep the suitability and honesty of the answers, less information about the study should be provided*".
- Improvements on the demographic questionnaire, such as "*working on weekends*" and "*domestic tasks/duties*" were refined as quantitative measures were applicable (1-2 times a week/ 3-4 times a week) instead of applying perceptual measures such as "*frequent*" or "*many times*".

We keep the integrity of most items without great changes. As stated previously, we were able to benefit from experts' perspectives and expertise. This has largely contributed to the refinement of the research instrument. Once engaged in an informal expert review, we have not only improved the clarity of the questionnaire, but we also increased the probability of obtaining meaningful and accurate responses from the respondents, as well as it established a strong foundation for the questionnaire forms appraisal, as the feedback provided by the experts guided us in structuring the questionnaire in a user-friendly manner (Forsyth et al., 2004).

We also reviewed the questionnaire's structure, formatting, and language to ensure its organisation and respondents' full comprehension. Through the feedback provided, we addressed key aspects such as phrasing and response options to reduce potential errors and ambiguities (Presser et al., 2004).

In short, the informal expert review and the questionnaire forms appraisal were a decisive and critical mark in our research process, as they contributed to strengthening the validity and reliability of our research instrument, leading to the enhancement of the credibility of our research findings.

To summarize, the primary goal of the pre-test was to ensure that respondents could easily understand the questions and that the proposed response options were clear and aligned with the research objectives (Perneger et al., 2015).

4.5. Concept Operationalization

The analysis will illuminate the theoretical foundations, measurement scales, and empirical evidence related to the constructs under study. By thoroughly examining each construct, we aim to enhance our understanding of its individual characteristics, interrelationships, and implications for organisations and employees.

This study aims to capture real estate agents' perceptions of their WFC/FWC, Burnout, Customer Orientation, and Value Co-Creation. To do so, a main set of four groups of questions (addressing each construct) was used with that intent, and another set of questions related to socio-demographic information was included.

The sociodemographic section of the questionnaire captures information about real estate agents, such as age, location of the agency, gender, education, marital status, number of children, elderly dependents, weekly working hours, and household tasks.

The sociodemographic part of the questionnaire is quite vast because we aim to capture a wide variety of factors that may have a positive or negative impact on work performance. Therefore, work demands, such as working non-traditional hours, may result in WFC and family demands; Similarly, the number of children and older dependents at home may interfere with work performance (Asiedu et al., 2018). (The full questionnaire is provided in the Appendix section.)

4.5.1. Work-to-Family/Family-to-Work Conflict Measurement Scale

Several scales have been developed over the years to assess WFC, including the Work-Family Conflict Scale (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), the Work-Family Spillover Scale (Hanson et al., 2006), and the Work-Family Interface Scale (Carlson et al., 2006). These measures capture the extent to which work demands negatively affect family life, assessing both time-based and strain-based dimensions of conflict. To measure WFC and FWC, ten open-ended questions were adapted from (Netemeyer et al., 1996) to capture real estate agents' perspectives on the topic. The use of this scale was due to its adequate scope and to meet our purpose of keeping the questionnaire as short as possible. So the reduced scale of WFC/FWC by Netemeyer et al., (1996) consists of two subscales, with five items measuring WFC and other five items measuring. The items are demonstrated in Table number 9.

Table 10 - WFC and FWC Scale

Scale: Work-Family Conflict e Family-Work Conflict
Questions Work-Family Conflict
1. The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.
2. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.
3. Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.
4. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.
5. Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.
Questions Family-Work Conflict
1. The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.
2. I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.
3. Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.

4. My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime.
5. Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.

All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, from one (1) to seven (7), where one (1) corresponds to "never", two (2) corresponds to "very few times", three (3) corresponds to "few times", four (4) corresponds to "sometimes", five (5) corresponds to "frequent", six (6) corresponds to "very frequently" and seven (7) corresponds to "always".

4.5.2. Job Burnout Measurement Scale

Over time, a considerable number of scales were developed to address burnout. These scales were built and used based on different subdimensions of Burnout. Next, we will briefly review the scales developed over time to measure Burnout upon research (Maslach and Leiter, 2016):

- Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI): developed by Maslach and Jackson, (1981), it is considered the main tool to measure Burnout as it is widely known. It measures the three dimensions of Burnout that arose from years of research.
- Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI): developed by Kristensen, Borritz, Villadsen, and Christensen, (2005) distinguishes from the previous as it identifies and underlines the difference between Pshycological and physical exhaustion, and it is assumed by authors as a MBI "Monopoly disruptor".
- Bergen Burnout Inventory (BBI): This scale measures three dimensions of Burnout: exhaustion at work, attitudinal cynicism towards the job, and inadequacy to fulfil job requirements.
- The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI): developed by Demerouti, (1999) it addresses two Burnout dimensions, such as exhaustion and disengagement at work;
- The Shirom-Melamed Burnout Measure (SMBM): Developed in the early studies of Shirom and Melamed in the 1980s, it distinguishes physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and cognitive fatigue.

With the intention of measuring Burnout in this research, the 10-item scale adapted by Rutherford et al. (2011) from the initial 22-item Maslach Burnout Inventory was utilized in order to retain the three facets of Burnout (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment). The main goal in utilizing a reduced scale is the correspondent time saving and fatigue reduction by respondents.

It is generally accepted that shorter scales lead to higher response rates from respondents (Allen, 2016). Despite reducing the scale to 10 items, all three facets of Burnout were preserved, leading to improved scale reliability and validity and a minimized Acquiescence bias as it discourages mindless agreement by respondents. Moreover, the 10-item scale used can be a valuable tool for researchers examining burnout in the sales context maintaining strong psychometric properties (Rutherford et al., 2011). Consistent with the reduced MBI scoring, items 5–7 are positively worded and were reverse-coded prior to analysis so that higher scores indicate greater burnout. On the seven-point scale the recode was x' = 8 - x. The items that cover the burnout construct are demonstrated in Table number 10.

Table 11 - Job Burnout Scale

Scale: Reduced Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)
Questions
1- I feel emotionally drained from my work
2- I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job
3- I feel burned out from my work
4- I feel frustrated by my job
5- I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work
6- I feel exhilarated after working closely with my clients
7- I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job
8- I feel I treat some clients as if they were impersonal objects
9- I've become more callous toward people since I took this job
10- I don't really care what happens to some recipients

All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, from one (1) to seven (7), where one (1) corresponds to "never", two (2) corresponds to "very few times", three (3) corresponds to "few times", four (4) corresponds to "sometimes", five (5) corresponds to "frequent", six (6) corresponds to "very frequently" and seven (7) corresponds to "always". Items five to seven (5–7) were reverse-coded (R).

4.5.3. Customer Orientation Measurement Scale

Many scales have been created to measure CO, but some have been renamed as Market Orientation scales due to their wider scope of analysis and measurement (Hajjat, 2002). From the same author (Hajjat, 2002), the CUSTOR Scale emerged to measure and evaluate actions and arrangements adopted by organisations aiming at attracting and retaining customers (Nouicer et al., 2017). The usefulness of the 24-item multidimensional S.O.C.O. Scale (Sales Orientation-Customer Orientation) created by Saxe and Weitz, (1982) in a period of Organisational offer adjustments to the specific needs of their customers. The search for consensus between supply and demand has marked the production of scientific knowledge - conceptual and empirical - in the field of Marketing Management. The essence of the SOCO scale reflects how crucial the application of the marketing concept was for Organisations when defining close relationships and mutual and sustained trust between sales teams and customers. In line with the aforementioned, we wanted to use a reduced scale that captured both attitudinal and behavioural Customer Orientation, therefore, we assessed real estate agent's customer orientation by using the reduced SOCO scale from Kassemeier et al., (2022) adapted originally from Stock and Hoyer, (2005) and Thomas, Soutar, and Ryan, (2001). The scale consisted of nine items that capture the extent to which the salesperson identified and met customers' needs appropriately.
The items that cover the SOCO scale are demonstrated in Table number 11.

Table 12 - S.O.C.O. Scale - Customer Orientation Scale

Scale: Adapted S.O.C.O. Scale
Questions
1- I try to figure out what a customer's needs are.
2- I have the customer's best interests in mind.
3- I offer products to customers, which satisfy his/her needs
4- I recommend products or solutions to customers, which are ideally suited to solve customers' problems.
5- I consider myself to be very customer oriented.
6- I enjoy interacting with customers.
7- Customer orientation is one of my personal goals.

8-	Customer orientation is very important within my job.
9-	I always have the customers' best interest in mind.

All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, from one (1) to seven (7), where one (1) corresponds to "never", two (2) corresponds to "very few times", three (3) corresponds to "few times", four (4) corresponds to "sometimes", five (5) corresponds to "frequent", six (6) corresponds to "very frequently" and seven (7) corresponds to "always".

4.5.4. Value Co-Creation Measurement Scale

In the past decades Value Co-Creation has drawn much attention from the literature as it constituted a structural shift in the marketing paradigm. As a consequence, a generous number of scales were developed to measure VCC.

By reviewing Value Co-Creation literature, we can identify the following scales:

- Customer Value Co-Creation Behaviour Scale: this scale, is particularly useful when evaluating customer performance. It is suitable for firms that regularly assess and reward activities so that customers will engage in value co-creation behaviour (Yi and Gong, 2013);
- Value Co-Creation Scale elaborated by Ranjan and Read, (2014). This scale captures all the dimensions of VCC, such as Co-Production (Knowledge, Equity, and Interaction), as well as Value-in-Use (Experience, Personalization, and Relationship).
- Customer Value Co-Creation Scale by Merz, Zarantonello, and Grappi, (2018). The authors developed a scale to assess the value of customers in the brand value co-creation process. Despite this development of Brand Co-Creation, to measure Value Co-Creation, the authors used Yi and Gong, (2013) Value Co-Creation scale to capture Customer Co-creation behaviour and Value Co-Creation by Ranjan and Read, (2014).

For the purpose of our research, we chose to use the Value Co-Creation scale developed by O'Cass and Ngo, (2012) as it is our understanding that this scale captures what we intend to measure as its feedback can be provided by the salesperson and not only measures Customer Participation in the Value Co-Creation process. Also, as mentioned earlier, we intended to keep the questionnaire short in order to reduce fatigue and encourage respondent participation (Allen, 2016). The items that cover the different dimensions of this construct are demonstrated in Table 12.

Table 13 - Value Co-Creation Scale

Scale: Value Co-Creation
Questions
1- We interact with customers to serve them better
2- We work together with customers to produce offerings that mobilize them.
3- We interact with customers to design offerings that meet their needs.
4- We provide products for and in conjunction with customers.
5- We co-opt customer involvement in providing products for them.
6- We provide customers with supporting systems to help them get more value.

All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale, from one (1) to seven (7), where one (1) corresponds to "never", two (2) corresponds to "very few times", three (3) corresponds to "few times", four (4) corresponds to "sometimes", five (5) corresponds to "frequent", six (6) corresponds to "very frequently" and seven (7) corresponds to "always".

4.6. Pilot Reliability Analysis of the Scales (pre-fielding diagnostic)

Before fielding the main survey, we evaluated the pilot data (n = 131) to verify that each multi-item scale functioned as intended and to identify any items requiring revision. For each construct (WFC, FWC, Job Burnout—reduced MBI, Customer Orientation, Value Co-creation), we inspected item–total correlations to detect underperforming indicators, followed by Cronbach's alpha measurement as an index of internal consistency, and, finally, confirmed correct handling of reverse-keyed items (where applicable). Following established guidance, we interpret alpha values ≥ .70 as acceptable and ≥ .80 as desirable for research use, while treating extremely high coefficients as a potential signal of redundant content rather than automatically "better" reliability (DeVellis, 2021; Hair, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt, 2022). Decisions at this stage were diagnostic, not confirmatory. Thus, no scale revisions were made unless an item showed both weak item–total association and questionable content relevance. The definitive psychometric evaluation—indicator outer loadings with bootstrapped inference, α, ρA, CR, AVE, and HTMT.

4.6.1. Item-to-Item Total Correlation

The Reliability of the scales was verified using two approaches: First, the Item-to-Total Correlation, and second the Internal Consistency Method.

The Item-to-Total correlation is a widely used method in the development and validation of scales. It ensures that the items included in a scale are reliable in measuring the intended construct. The method also helps in determining whether any specific item of the scale does not fit well with the other items. Also, if removing an item increases the overall reliability (Cronbach's Alpha), it might be an indicator that the item is not consistent with the rest of the scale (Marianti et al., 2023).

Table number 13 presents the reliability analysis of the Reduced Maslach Burnout Inventory (Reduced MBI), which includes 10 items designed to measure various aspects of burnout among employees. Each item's contribution to the overall reliability of the scale is assessed through three key metrics: the mean of the scale if the item is deleted, the corrected item-total correlation, and Cronbach's alpha if the item is deleted.

Table 14 - Reliability Statistics for Reduced Maslach Inventory

	Mean if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Reduced Maslach Inventory (Reduced MBI)			
Burnout_1_I feel emotionally drained from my work	22,695	0,576	0,768
Burnout_2_I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job	22,244	0,669	0,755
Burnout_3_I feel burned out from my work	22,420	0,599	0,765
Burnout_4_I feel frustrated by my job	22,634	0,616	0,762
Burnout_5_I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work	22,466	0,466	0,781
Burnout_6_I feel exhilarated after working closely with my clients	22,657	0,413	0,787
Burnout_7_I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job	22,412	0,387	0,790
Burnout_8_I feel I treat some clients as if they were impersonal objects	23,603	0,316	0,796
Burnout_9_I've become more callous toward people since I took this job	23,290	0,342	0,795
Burnout_10_I don't really care what happens to some recipients	23,466	0,304	0,798

The analysis performed reveals that most items of the Reduced MBI scale have high corrected item-total correlations, indicating reasonable internal consistency. Items such as Burnout_2 and Burnout_4 show particularly high correlations (0.669 and 0.616, respectively), suggesting they are key contributors to the scale's reliability. On the other side, items like Burnout_8 and Burnout_10 have lower correlations (0.316 and 0.304), indicating they may not align so well with the other items on the scale.

The Cronbach's alpha for the burnout scale is 0.798, which is acceptable for psychological constructs. Removing any single item does not significantly improve this value, suggesting that the current items collectively provide a reliable measure of burnout.

Table number 14 and Table number 15, in turn, present the reliability analysis of the WFC and FWC, which includes 10, each consisting of 5 WFC items and 5 FWC items designed to measure the respective constructs.

Table 15 - Reliability Statistics for Work-Family Conflict Scale

	Mean if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
(WFC) Work-Family Conflict			
WFC_1_The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.	12,718	0,712	0,928
WFC_2_The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.	13,427	0,876	0,897
WFC_3_Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.	13,160	0,807	0,911
WFC_4_My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.	13,656	0,822	0,908
WFC_5_Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.	13,450	0,831	0,906

For the Work-Family Conflict scale, items such as WFC_2 ("The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities") and WFC_5 ("Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities") show particularly high corrected item-total correlations (0.876 and 0.831, respectively), suggesting they are important contributors to the scale's reliability. The "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted" values range from 0.897 to 0.928, showing that no single item unduly inflates or depresses the scale's reliability.

Table 16 - Reliability Statistics for Family-Work Conflict Scale

	Mean if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
(FWC) Family-Work Conflict			
FWC_1_The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.	8,500	0,737	0,895
FWC_2_I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.	8,790	0,746	0,891
FWC_3_Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.	9,030	0,836	0,874
FWC_4_My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime.	9,020	0,714	0,897
FWC_5_Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.	9,020	0,814	0,876

Similarly, for the Family-Work Conflict (FWC) scale, items like FWC_3 ("Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.") and FWC_5 ("Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.") show high corrected item-total correlations (0.836 and 0.814, respectively). The "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted" values range from 0.897 to 0.928, indicating that no single item disproportionately enhances or diminishes the scale's internal consistency.

Regarding Customer Orientation, Table number 16 shows the reliability analysis for this scale, which includes 9 items that measure employees' CO behaviour.

Table 17 - Reliability Statistics for Customer Orientation Scale

	Mean if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Customer Orientation			
OC_1_I try to figure out what a customer's needs are.	47,340	0,872	0,958
OC_2_ I have the customer's best interests in mind.	47,340	0,883	0,958
OC_3_I offer products to customers, which satisfy his/her needs	47,630	0,795	0,962
OC_4_I recommend products or solutions to customers, which are ideally suited to solve customers' problems.	47,510	0,859	0,959
OC_5_I consider myself to be very customer-oriented.	47,580	0,895	0,957
OC_6_I enjoy interacting with customers.	47,690	0,812	0,961
OC_7_Customer orientation is one of my personal goals.	47,850	0,760	0,965
OC_8_Customer orientation is very important within my job.	47,450	0,896	0,957
OC_9_I always have the customers' best interest in mind.	47,380	0,904	0,957

The analysis revealed that the items on the Customer Orientation scale have high corrected item-total correlations, indicating strong internal consistency. As such, items such as OC_2 ("I have the customer's best interests in mind") and OC_9 ("I always have the customers' best interest in mind") show particularly high correlations (0.883 and 0.904, respectively), suggesting they are key contributors to the scale's reliability. Conversely, items like OC_7 ("Customer orientation is one of my personal goals") have lower, but still acceptable, correlations (0.760), indicating they may not align as well with the other items on the scale but still contribute to the overall reliability.

The "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted" values for the Customer Orientation scale are very high, ranging from 0.957 to 0.965, indicating excellent internal consistency. Removing any single item does not significantly improve this value, suggesting that the current items collectively provide a reliable measure of customer orientation.

Finally, we have also performed Reliability Analysis for Value Co-Creation scale as well. The results are on the Table number 17.

Table 18 - Reliability Statistics for Value Co-Creation Scale

	Mean if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Value Co-Creation			
CCV_1_I interact with customers to serve them better	27,570	0,814	0,935
CCV_2_I work together with customers to produce offerings that mobilize them.	27,810	0,870	0,928
CCV_3_I interact with customers to design offerings that meet their needs.	27,790	0,880	0,927
CCV_4_We provide products for and in conjunction with customers.	28,050	0,901	0,924
CCV_5_We co-opt customer involvement in providing products for them.	28,200	0,793	0,938
CCV_6_We provide customers with supporting systems to help them get more value.	28,070	0,731	0,945

Similarly to the previous reliability analysis undertaken, most items on the Value Co-Creation scale have high corrected item-total correlations, indicating strong internal consistency. Items like CCV_4 ("We provide products for and in conjunction with customers") and CCV_3 ("I interact with customers to design offerings that meet their needs") show particularly high correlations (0.901 and 0.880, respectively), suggesting they contribute largely to the scale's reliability. In turn, items like CCV_6 ("We provide customers with supporting systems to help them get more value") have slightly lower, but still very acceptable correlations (0.731), indicating they may not align as well with the other items on the scale but still have an important contribution to the overall reliability.

The "Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted" values for Value Co-Creation scale is very high, ranging from 0.924 to 0.945, indicating excellent internal consistency. Removing any single item does not significantly improve this value, suggesting that the current items collectively provide a reliable measure of value co-creation.

4.6.2. Internal Consistency Method

Regarding the internal consistency method, we use Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient. This is a statistical test used to assess the internal consistency or reliability of a scale. It is commonly used to determine how closely related a set of items or questions within a measurement instrument is to each other or converges to each other (Taber, 2018).

It provides, therefore, confidence in the results measured by the scales used in the study. In short, Cronbach's Alpha indicates that the items within the test are consistent in measuring the same construct, ensuring consistency in the results.

The Cronbach's Alpha values must be higher than 0.70, which indicates the reliability, correlation, and homogeneity of the items. This allows a high degree of confidence and accuracy of the same values over time (Pestana and Gageiro, 2008). The following Table 17 refers to the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient values as a result of the consistency analysis performed.

Table 19 - Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α) Values

Cronbach Alpha (α) Coefficient Values

Cronbach Alpha (α)	Internal Consistency
0,90 - 100,0	Very Good
0,80 - 0,89	Good
0,70 - 0,79	Reasonable
0,60 - 0,69	Weak
< 0,60	Inadmissible

Source: Pestana and Gageiro (2008)

Relying on Table number 18, it can be concluded that the internal consistency of the reduced MBI items is satisfactory, as their Cronbach's Alpha 0.798 (approximately 0.80) corresponds to good.

As per the other scales, their alpha values show very good internal consistency for the remaining variables of the model. The internal consistency of the (WFC) Work Family Conflict items is very good with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.927. The internal consistency of the (FWC) Family Work Conflict items is also very good as its Cronbach's Alpha points to 0.907. As per the scale used to measure Customer Orientation items is very robust as it evidences a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.964. The internal consistency of the Value Co-Creation items is also very good with a Cronbach's Alpha measured of 0.943. Below the results of the Coefficient Values are listed in table number 19.

Table 20 - Cronbach Alpha (α) Coefficient Values

	Number of Items	Cronbach Alpha
Reduced Maslach Inventory (Reduced MBI)	10	0,798
(WFC) Work Family Conflict	5	0.927
(FWC) Family Work Conflict	5	0,907
Customer Orientation	9	0,964
Value Co-Creation	6	0,943

Source: Own Elaboration

In short, Cronbach's alpha values range from 0 to 1, and values above 0.8 are generally considered the most acceptable (Suhartini et al., 2021), indicating good reliability of the measuring instrument. All values presented in Table number 19 are above 0.7, which suggests that the constructs have an acceptable reliability (Saidi and Siew, 2019). In particular, the "Customer Orientation" and "Value Co-Creation" constructs have very high Cronbach's alphas (0.964 and 0.943, respectively), which indicates excellent internal consistency. This means that the questions written within each construct are well correlated with each other, suggesting that they are effectively measuring what they intend to measure.

4.7. Analytic Strategy: Positioning SEM and Justification for PLS-SEM

We employed structural equation modelling (SEM) to test the hypothesised relations among the latent constructs—Work-to-Family Conflict, Family-to-Work Conflict, Job Burnout, Customer Orientation, and Value Co-creation. SEM is a second-generation multivariate technique that simultaneously estimates the measurement relations between indicators and latent variables and the structural relations among constructs, thus integrating confirmatory factor analysis with path modelling (Hair et al., 2022; Kline, 2023).

Two main SEM traditions exist: covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM) and variance-based SEM (PLS-SEM). CB-SEM is generally preferred for strict theory testing and global model fit, whereas PLS-SEM is advantageous when the research objective emphasises explanation of key constructs, evaluation of complex mediated relationships, and prediction-oriented assessment of endogenous variables —

particularly in models with several latent variables, smaller sample sizes, or data that deviate from multivariate normality (Hair et al., 2022; Rigdon, 2016; Sarstedt, Ringle, & Hair, 2017).

Although the present study is grounded in theory, several characteristics of the research design make PLS-SEM an appropriate estimation approach. First, the model includes multiple endogenous constructs and a sequential mediation structure (Burnout → Customer Orientation → Value Co-creation), conditions under which PLS-SEM offers robust estimation with fewer distributional constraints (Shmueli et al., 2019; Kock, 2023). Second, the indicators are reflective, congeneric, and originate from adapted psychometric scales, making variance-based estimation suitable for exploring construct relationships under realistic behavioural measurement conditions. Third, the sample size (N = 131), while acceptable for CB-SEM under particular specifications, is better accommodated by PLS-SEM in models with several pathways and multiple indicators, ensuring stable bootstrapped estimates and more reliable assessment of indirect effects (Hair et al., 2022).

To complement the PLS-SEM mediation analysis and strengthen the robustness of the findings, we also performed a regression-based bootstrap analysis using PROCESS Model 4 with 5,000 resamples (Hayes, 2018). Convergent results across estimation paradigms offer methodological triangulation and increase confidence in the stability of the indirect effect (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010; Sarstedt et al., 2017).

Model evaluation followed the recommended two-step procedure (Hair et al., 2022).

- Measurement model: indicator reliability ($\lambda \geq .708$), internal consistency (α, ρA, CR), convergent validity (AVE ≥ .50), and discriminant validity via HTMT with bootstrapped confidence intervals (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).
- Structural model: inner VIF for collinearity, bootstrapped path significance (5,000 resamples), effect sizes (f^2), explanatory power (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and PLSpredict, now considered best practice in PLS-SEM reporting (Shmueli et al., 2019).

While fit indices such as SRMR can be reported descriptively in PLS-SEM, recent guidelines emphasise a multi-criteria evaluation informed by theoretical coherence, model parsimony, predictive adequacy, and diagnostic checks rather than strict cutoffs (Ringle, Sarstedt, & Hair, 2023).

V.

5. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The chapter we are about to begin will focus on the analysis, interpretation and the discussion of the data collected. It should be noted that the quality of this analysis depends on how the variables under study were operationalized as well as on the quality of the measurement utilized.

Data analysis involves systematically organizing the collected data to improve understanding and effectively present the findings. The statistical methods applied in this process focused on classifying, describing and interpreting the data gathered during the final phase of data collection (through the use of questionnaires), taking into account the defined objectives (research goals) and formulated hypotheses (Lammers and Babbie, 2005).

Following the final data collection from real-estate salespersons across Portugal, we prepared and screened the dataset in SPSS v29 (descriptives, reliability, and preliminaries) and conducted hypothesis testing using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS (v4) with 5,000 bootstrap resamples for inference.

5.1. Description of the sample

The sample comprises 131 sales consultants who participated in the study. Women represent the majority of respondents (55.7%), while men account for 44.3%. Regarding educational attainment, nearly half of the participants hold a university degree (47.3%), followed by those with upper secondary education (28.2%). Smaller groups have completed basic education (8.4%) or report postgraduate qualifications, including a master's degree (14.5%) and a doctoral degree (1.5%).

With respect to marital status, most participants are married or cohabiting (60.3%), while 39.7% are single, divorced, or widowed. In terms of family structure, a majority of respondents have dependent children (61.8%), and a smaller proportion (11.5%) report providing care for older adults, indicating some intergenerational caregiving responsibilities within the sample.

Table 21 - Socio-demographic and Family Characteristics of the Sample (N = 131)

Variable	Category	%
Gender	Female	55.7
	Male	44.3
Education	Basic education	8.4
	Upper secondary education	28.2
	University degree	47.3
	Master's degree	14.5
	Doctorate	1.5
Marital status	Married / Cohabiting	60.3
	Single / Divorced / Widowed	39.7
Dependent children	Yes	61.8
	No	38.2
Care for older adults	Yes	11.5
	No	88.5

From a professional standpoint, long working hours are prevalent: three-quarters of the consultants work 40 hours per week or more (74.0%), while the remaining 26.0% report shorter weekly workloads. Weekend and holiday work is also common, although its frequency varies considerably. Nearly one-third

of respondents work two or three weekends per month (32.8%), 29.0% work one weekend per month, 16.0% report working every weekend, and 22.1% do not work on weekends or holidays.

Regarding domestic support, 41.2% of participants report not receiving any assistance with household tasks, 32.8% rely on domestic workers, and 26.0% receive help from family members. Overall, these figures portray a group of sales consultants who balance demanding professional schedules with diverse family and caregiving responsibilities.

These characteristics are summarised in Table 20 and Table 21, which respectively detail the sociodemographic/family and professional profiles of the respondents.

Table 22 - Socio-demographic and Family Characteristics of the Sample (N = 131)

Variable	Category	%
Weekly working hours	Less than 40 hours	26.0
	40 hours or more	74.0
Weekend/holiday work frequency	Does not work on weekends or holidays	22.1
	Works one weekend per month	29.0
	Works two or three weekends per month	32.8
	Works every weekend	16.0
Domestic support	No help	41.2
	Help from family members	26.0
	Domestic worker	32.8

This section analyses five core dimensions: the Reduced Maslach Burnout Inventory (Reduced MBI), Work–Family Conflict (WFC), Family–Work Conflict (FWC), Customer Orientation (CO), and Value Co-Creation (VCC). All constructs were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 7 ("always"), where higher values indicate greater frequency of the described behaviours or experiences.

The Reduced Maslach Burnout Inventory records a mean of 2.53 (SD = 0.87), corresponding to experiences that occur only a few times, with a coefficient of variation (34.4%) suggesting high dispersion and considerable individual variability.

Work–Family Conflict (WFC) shows an average of 3.32 (SD = 1.26), pointing to occasional interference of work with family life, whereas Family–Work Conflict (FWC) is notably lower (M = 2.22, SD = 1.06), reflecting rare interference from family in work responsibilities. Both dimensions display marked variability (CV = 37.9% and 47.7%, respectively), denoting heterogeneous experiences of role conflict.

By contrast, behavioural constructs exhibit higher and more consistent levels. Customer Orientation (CO) averages 5.94 (SD = 1.16), and Value Co-Creation (VCC) 5.58 (SD = 1.24), corresponding to behaviours reported as frequent. The associated coefficients of variation (19.5% and 22.2%) indicate moderate dispersion, meaning that these practices are relatively stable across respondents.

Overall, conflict-related constructs present low means and high dispersion, while the behavioural constructs show the opposite pattern, high means and moderate variability, reflecting the coexistence of occasional strain with generally positive, customer-focused professional conduct.

Reduced Maslach Burnout Inventory

Each item within the Reduced MBI covers the full response scale, reflecting diverse perceptions of burnout among consultants (Table 22). The highest means are observed for emotional exhaustion items such as “I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job” (M = 3.10, SD = 1.58) and “I feel burned out from my work” (M = 2.98, SD = 1.55). Slightly lower averages correspond to personal accomplishment items, such as “I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job” (M = 2.81, SD = 1.39) and “I feel I’m positively influencing other people’s lives through my work” (M = 2.72, SD = 1.37).

The lowest means are reported for depersonalisation items, including “I feel I treat some clients as if they were impersonal objects” (M = 1.91, SD = 1.37) and “I don’t really care what happens to some recipients” (M = 2.05, SD = 1.52). Standard deviations between 1.3 and 1.6 denote moderate dispersion, reflecting some heterogeneity in burnout experiences among participants.

Table 23 - Descriptive Statistics for the Reduced Maslach Burnout Inventory (N = 131)

Item	Min	Max	M	SD
I feel emotionally drained from my work.	1	7	2.73	1.50
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	1	6	3.10	1.58
I feel burned out from my work.	1	7	2.98	1.55
I feel frustrated by my job.	1	7	2.82	1.65
I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.	1	6	2.72	1.37
I feel exhilarated after working closely with my clients.	1	6	2.59	1.32
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.	1	7	2.81	1.39
I feel I treat some clients as if they were impersonal objects.	1	6	1.91	1.37
I've become more callous toward people since I took this job.	1	7	2.16	1.54
I don't really care what happens to some recipients.	1	7	2.05	1.52

Note. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 7 ("always").

Work–Family and Family–Work Conflict

Table 23 summarises the descriptive results for both conflict dimensions. In both cases, respondents made full use of the seven-point Likert scale (1 = never to 7 = always), indicating a broad dispersion of experiences regarding interrole interference.

For Work–Family Conflict (WFC), mean scores range between M = 3.11 and M = 3.75 (SD = 1.43–1.52). The highest average was recorded for the item "The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life" (M = 3.75, SD = 1.47), followed by "Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me" (M = 3.44, SD = 1.52). These values indicate that, for many consultants, work demands occasionally to frequently interfere with family activities and responsibilities.

By contrast, Family–Work Conflict (FWC) presents lower mean values (M = 2.18–2.68, SD = 1.28–1.38), suggesting that family-related pressures or obligations interfere less frequently with work performance. The observed coefficients of variation (≈ 35–45%) point to moderate heterogeneity among respondents, indicating that although some consultants face notable interrole tension, such experiences are not pervasive across the sample.

Table 24 - Descriptive Statistics for Work–Family Conflict (WFC) and Family–Work Conflict (FWC) Items

Construct	Item	Min	Max	M	SD
Work–Family Conflict (WFC)					
	The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.	1	7	3.75	1.47
	The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities.	1	7	3.22	1.43
	Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.	1	7	3.44	1.52
	My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil family duties.	1	7	3.11	1.44
	Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.	1	7	3.28	1.45
Family–Work Conflict (FWC)					
	The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.	1	7	2.68	1.38
	I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.	1	7	2.43	1.31
	Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.	1	7	2.18	1.28
	My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime.	1	7	2.24	1.34
	Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.	1	7	2.21	1.34

Note. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 7 ("always").

Customer Orientation and Value Co-Creation

The descriptive statistics for Customer Orientation (CO) and Value Co-Creation (VCC) are presented in Tables 24 and 25 respectively. Both constructs display high mean scores and moderate dispersion, suggesting that respondents consistently report frequent engagement in customer-focused and co-creative professional behaviours.

For Customer Orientation, mean values range from M = 5.63 to M = 6.13 (SD = 1.17–1.58). These results indicate that participants strongly identify with customer-oriented attitudes and practices. The highest means correspond to statements such as "I try to figure out what a customer's needs are" and "I have the customer's best interests in mind", both with M = 6.13. Other items, including "Customer orientation is very important within my job" (M = 6.02, SD = 1.33) and "I always have the customers' best interest in mind" (M = 6.09, SD = 1.27), reinforce the prominence of customer-centric values

among respondents. Even the item with the lowest mean, "Customer orientation is one of my personal goals" (M = 5.63, SD = 1.58), still reflects a high level of personal commitment to customer-oriented principles.

The observed standard deviations, ranging between 1.17 and 1.58, denote moderate variability, implying some differences in the intensity of this orientation but overall homogeneous agreement among consultants. These findings confirm that participants value understanding customer needs, maintaining customers' best interests, and providing solutions that meet or exceed expectations.

Table 25 - Descriptive Statistics for Customer Orientation Items (N = 131)

Construct	Item	Min	Max	M	SD
Customer Orientation					
	I try to figure out what a customer's needs are.	2	7	6.13	1.24
	I have the customer's best interests in mind.	2	7	6.13	1.17
	I offer products to customers which satisfy their needs.	1	7	5.84	1.36
	I recommend products or solutions ideally suited to solve customers' problems.	2	7	5.96	1.19
	I consider myself to be very customer-oriented.	1	7	5.89	1.28
	I enjoy interacting with customers.	2	7	5.78	1.36
	Customer orientation is one of my personal goals.	1	7	5.63	1.58
	Customer orientation is very important within my job.	1	7	6.02	1.33
	I always have the customers' best interest in mind.	1	7	6.09	1.27

Note. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 7 ("always").

Concerning Value Co-Creation it demonstrates consistently high averages, with mean values between M = 5.30 and M = 5.92 (SD = 1.26–1.53). The item "I interact with customers to serve them better" records the highest mean (M = 5.92, SD = 1.26), followed by "I interact with customers to design offerings that meet their needs" (M = 5.71, SD = 1.38) and "I work together with customers to produce offerings that mobilise them" (M = 5.69, SD = 1.40). Lower, yet still high, averages were observed for "We co-opt customer involvement in providing products for them" (M = 5.30, SD = 1.53) and "We provide customers with supporting systems to help them get more value" (M = 5.43, SD = 1.45).

These results confirm that respondents frequently engage in value co-creation activities, involving customers not only as recipients but as active partners in service processes. The consistent use of the

upper end of the scale demonstrates a pervasive orientation toward interaction, collaboration, and shared value generation.

Taken together, the findings for CO and VCC suggest that the sales consultants in this study display a strong customer-centric and collaborative professional profile. Their behaviours extend beyond meeting customers' immediate needs to actively involving them in the co-design and delivery of value, thereby fostering innovation, trust, and long-term relational outcomes.

Table 26 – Descriptive Statistics for Customer Orientation and Value Co-Creation Items (N = 131)

Construct	Item	Min	Max	M	SD
Value Co-Creation					
	I interact with customers to serve them better.	2	7	5.92	1.26
	I work together with customers to produce offerings that mobilize them.	1	7	5.69	1.40
	I interact with customers to design offerings that meet their needs.	1	7	5.71	1.38
	We provide products for and in conjunction with customers.	1	7	5.45	1.40
	We co-opt customer involvement in providing products for them.	1	7	5.30	1.53
	We provide customers with supporting systems to help them get more value.	1	7	5.43	1.45

Note. All items were measured on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("never") to 7 ("always").

Across all constructs, a clear pattern emerges. The relational and behavioural variables, Customer Orientation and Value Co-Creation, display consistently high and homogeneous levels, reflecting professional practices strongly centred on the customer. Conversely, the role conflict dimensions and burnout show lower mean values and greater variability, suggesting that, although experiences of strain and interference are generally infrequent, they vary substantially across individuals. Overall, the profile of the sales consultants is characterised by high engagement and collaboration with clients, coexisting with low levels of conflict and emotional exhaustion.

5.2. Multivariate Data Analysis with PLS-SEM

This chapter aims to test the hypotheses depicted in Figure 1. To achieve this objective, we used partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS (Ringle et al., version 4.1.1.6). PLS-SEM was chosen because the study is prediction-oriented, the model is moderately complex (multiple latent constructs with several indicators), the sample size is relatively small (N = 131), and the data may be based on non-normal distribution, which is consistent with current recommendations for variance-based SEM (Hair et al., 2022).

We follow the standard two-stage PLS-SEM procedure, beginning with the evaluation of the measurement model, followed by the structural model. This sequence ensures that the construct measures are valid and reliable before drawing any conclusions regarding relationships among the latent variables. The reflective measurement model was assessed in terms of individual item reliability, construct reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011; Hair et al., 2022). For reflective constructs, we evaluate indicator reliability via outer loadings (target $\gtrsim .708$), internal consistency using composite reliability (CR), rho A (ρA), and Cronbach's alpha (reporting all three, with ρA typically lying between α and CR), and convergent validity via AVE $\geq .50$. Discriminant validity is examined primarily through the Fornell–Larcker test complemented by the HTMT criterion (Henseler et al., 2014; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2022).

5.2.1. Measurement Model Evaluation (Reflective Constructs)

5.2.1.1. Indicator screening and item retention

The reflective measurement model demonstrates satisfactory psychometric quality under contemporary PLS-SEM criteria. Indicator reliability is strong: all retained items load substantively on their intended constructs (most $\lambda \gtrsim .80$; lowest $\approx .76$) with large bootstrapped t-values, indicating that each indicator shares substantial variance with its latent variable (Hair et al., 2022; Kline, 2023).

For Work–Family Conflict (WFC), Family–Work Conflict (FWC), Burnout, Customer Orientation (CO) and Value Co-creation (VCC), all retained indicators meet or exceed conventional loading thresholds. In the

Burnout construct, three depersonalisation items ("I feel I treat some clients as if they were impersonal objects", "I've become more callous toward people since I took this job" and "I don't really care what happens to some recipients") were removed due to low loadings, while the remaining items maintain robust loadings and satisfactory psychometric properties. After this refinement, the burnout battery captures more strongly the exhaustion-centred facet of burnout; as such, references to "burnout" in this study should be interpreted as exhaustion-dominant (Kline, 2023).

Overall, the pattern of outer loadings and their bootstrap statistics supports the retention of the remaining indicators and provides strong evidence of indicator reliability for all constructs (Table 26).

Table 27 - Measurement Statistics for Reflective Construct Scales (N = 131)

Construct / Item	Loading	t value	Skewness	Kurtosis
Work–Family Conflict (WFC)				
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.	0.801	19.83	0.02	−0.69
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities.	0.919	41.47	0.23	−0.72
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.	0.897	36.24	0.13	−0.96
My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil family duties.	0.924	62.26	0.30	−0.72
Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.	0.910	56.59	0.27	−0.72
Family–Work Conflict (FWC)				
The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.	0.830	16.74	0.83	0.52
I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.	0.869	22.06	1.18	1.50
Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.	0.896	24.76	1.45	2.19
My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work (e.g., getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, working overtime).	0.820	17.16	1.23	1.14
Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.	0.897	32.15	1.23	1.18
Burnout (Reduced MBI)				
I feel emotionally drained from my work.	0.768	14.79	0.48	−0.72
I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job.	0.764	14.35	0.26	−1.08
I feel burned out from my work.	0.792	17.96	0.47	−0.64
I feel frustrated by my job.	0.783	16.88	0.53	−0.92
I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.	0.806	23.95	0.80	0.08
I feel exhilarated after working closely with my clients.	0.823	24.40	1.03	0.70
I have accomplished many worthwhile things in this job.	0.776	16.69	0.77	−0.06
Customer Orientation (CO)				
I try to figure out what a customer's needs are.	0.906	38.96	−1.57	2.19
I have the customer's best interests in mind.	0.913	44.01	−1.39	1.58
I offer products to customers which satisfy their needs.	0.840	14.01	−1.46	2.27
I recommend products or solutions to customers which are ideally suited to solve customers' problems.	0.891	31.55	−1.30	1.65
I consider myself to be very customer-oriented.	0.920	50.93	−1.21	1.20
I enjoy interacting with customers.	0.847	27.76	−0.89	−0.18
Customer orientation is one of my personal goals.	0.807	17.83	−1.15	0.59
Customer orientation is very important within my job.	0.919	53.91	−1.53	2.06
I always have the customers' best interest in mind.	0.929	47.79	−1.69	2.93

Construct / Item	Loading	t value	Skewness	Kurtosis
Value Co-Creation (VCC)				
I interact with customers to serve them better.	0.886	35.23	−1.20	1.19
I work together with customers to produce offerings that mobilise them.	0.928	60.29	−1.17	1.25
I interact with customers to design offerings that meet their needs.	0.928	70.73	−1.16	1.02
We provide products for and in conjunction with customers.	0.928	56.55	−0.78	0.26
We co-opt customer involvement in providing products for them.	0.843	18.35	−0.78	0.02
We provide customers with supporting systems to help them get more value.	0.794	16.28	−0.78	−0.01

Note. CR = composite reliability; α = Cronbach's alpha; AVE = average variance extracted; ρA = rho_A. Three low-loading depersonalisation items from the Burnout scale were removed and are not shown.

5.2.1.2. Internal consistency and convergent validity

Internal consistency was evaluated via Cronbach's alpha (α), rho A (ρA), and composite reliability (CR), and convergent validity via AVE ≥ .50, which together indicate whether the items cohere and whether each construct explains a substantial proportion of its indicators' variance (Hair et al., 2022; Kline, 2023).

All constructs display excellent reliability. Cronbach's alpha ranges from .901 to .966 (Burnout = .901; WFC = .935; FWC = .914; VCC = .945; CO = .966). As expected, ρA and CR are slightly higher than α for each construct (ρA = .913–.967; CR = .920–.971), indicating congeneric measurement and stable composite scores. Notably, CO, WFC and VCC show CR values around .95–.97. Although such levels are desirable from a reliability standpoint, values this high can sometimes hint at item redundancy or narrow construct breadth. We therefore retained all items to preserve content coverage, verified discriminant validity, and explicitly note this as a consideration for future scale refinement rather than a basis for automatic item pruning.

Convergent validity is supported, as AVE comfortably exceeds .50 for every construct (CO = .786; FWC = .745; VCC = .785; WFC = .795; Burnout = .621), indicating that each latent variable explains well over half of the variance in its indicators. Burnout's AVE (.621) and CR (.920) are solid given the reduced MBI battery. These results, summarised in Table 27, confirm that the reflective measures demonstrate strong internal consistency and convergent validity.

Table 28 - Internal Consistency and Convergent Validity (α, ρA, CR, AVE)

Construct	Cronbach's α	rho_A (ρA)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Work–Family Conflict (WFC)	0.935	0.940	0.940	0.795
Family–Work Conflict (FWC)	0.914	0.920	0.920	0.745
Burnout	0.901	0.913	0.920	0.621
Customer Orientation (CO)	0.966	0.967	0.971	0.786
Value Co-Creation (VCC)	0.945	0.950	0.950	0.785

Note. All reliability coefficients exceed recommended thresholds (α, ρA, CR > .70; AVE > .50), confirming internal consistency and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022).

5.2.1.3. Discriminant validity: Fornell–Larcker criterion

As supporting evidence of discriminant validity, we apply the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which requires that each construct's square root of AVE exceeds its correlations with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2022). This condition is met for every construct (see Table 28). The closest pair is Customer Orientation–Value Co-creation (correlation = 0.858), which remains below the corresponding √AVE values (0.887 and 0.886), indicating adequate separation despite strong conceptual relatedness. As recommended in contemporary PLS-SEM practice, Fornell–Larcker is interpreted as supporting evidence, while the primary test of discriminant validity is the HTMT criterion (Henseler et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2022).

Table 29 - Discriminant Validity: Fornell–Larcker Criterion (N = 131)

Construct	Burnout	CO	FWC	VCC	WFC
Burnout	**0.788**				
Customer Orientation (CO)	−0.625	**0.887**			
Family–Work Conflict (FWC)	0.325	−0.378	**0.863**		
Value Co-Creation (VCC)	−0.601	0.756	−0.374	**0.886**	
Work–Family Conflict (WFC)	0.309	−0.346	0.648	−0.333	**0.892**

Note. The diagonal elements (in bold) represent the square root of the AVE for each construct. All diagonal values exceed the corresponding inter-construct correlations, indicating discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).

5.2.1.4. Discriminant validity: HTMT matrix

Discriminant validity also reflects the extent to which each construct is empirically distinct from the others. We assessed this using the heterotrait–monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) with the strict HTMT.85 criterion (Henseler et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2017, 2022).

All HTMT values are below the conservative .85 threshold, and the upper bounds of their 95% bootstrap confidence intervals also remain below .85, supporting discriminant validity across all pairs of constructs (see Table 29). The highest HTMT value is observed for the CO–VCC pair, consistent with their conceptual proximity, but still below the strict cut-off. These results indicate that all constructs are empirically distinct, even in the presence of strong theoretical relatedness between customer-facing constructs.

Table 30 - Discriminant Validity: HTMT Matrix (N = 131)

Construct	Burnout	CO	FWC	VCC	WFC
Burnout	—	0.684	0.479	0.623	0.456
Customer Orientation (CO)		—	0.364	0.856	0.337
Family–Work Conflict (FWC)			—	0.369	0.681
Value Co-Creation (VCC)				—	0.355
Work–Family Conflict (WFC)					—

Note. All HTMT values are below the conservative threshold of 0.85, supporting discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015).

Taken together, the measurement model exhibits robust indicator reliability, high internal consistency, satisfactory convergent validity, and clear discriminant validity, thereby supporting the credibility of the subsequent structural inferences.

5.2.2. Structural Model Evaluation

With measurement adequacy established, we proceed to test the hypothesised relations using bootstrapped path coefficients and confidence intervals, the recommended basis for inference in variance-based SEM (Hair et al., 2022; Rigdon, 2016).

5.2.2.1. Collinearity (inner VIF values)

We inspect inner VIFs to rule out problematic multicollinearity among predictors of each endogenous construct, as excessive collinearity inflates standard errors and undermines path stability (Hair et al., 2022; Kock & Lynn, 2012). The ideal VIF is 1, indicating an absence of multicollinearity; values between 3 and 5 may already signal concern, and values above 5 are generally considered unacceptable.

All inner VIF values in our model lie between 1.459 and 1.860 (Table 30), well below conservative thresholds, indicating that multicollinearity is not a concern for any endogenous construct.

Table 31 - Collinearity Statistics (Inner VIF Values) (N = 131)

Predictor	VIF
Job Burnout	1.860
Family–Work Conflict	1.471
Work–Family Conflict	1.459
Customer Orientation	1.600

Note. VIF = Variance Inflation Factor. Values below 3 indicate no problematic multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2022).

5.2.2.2. Structural path coefficients

Table 31 reports the structural path coefficients (β), bootstrapped standard errors (SE), t-values, p-values, and 95% confidence intervals (Cis). The overall implications for the hypotheses are as follows:

H1 – Work-to-Family Conflict ⟶ Job Burnout. The effect is positive and significant (β = 0.309, SE = 0.097, t = 3.190, p = .001; 95% CI [0.140, 0.460]). Greater interference of work with family is associated with higher burnout.

H2 – Family-to-Work Conflict → Job Burnout. The effect is also positive and significant (β = 0.325, SE = 0.081, t = 4.027, p < .001; 95% CI [0.187, 0.449]), indicating that higher spillover from family into work relates to higher burnout.

H3/H4 – Direct effects of WFC/FWC on Value Co-creation. Neither conflict dimension shows a reliable direct association with VCC (FWC → VCC: β = –0.047, t = 0.702, p = .482; WFC → VCC: β = –0.007, t = 0.147, p = .883; Cis include zero). Their impacts on value co-creation therefore appear to operate primarily through burnout and subsequent customer orientation, rather than directly.

H5 – Job Burnout → Value Co-creation. The direct effect is negative but not statistically significant at the .05 level (β = –0.129, SE = 0.072, t = 1.802, p = .072; 95% CI [–0.238, 0.008]). Thus, the hypothesised direct negative effect is not supported at the conventional α = .05 level.

H6 – Job Burnout → Customer Orientation. The path is negative and strong (β = –0.625, SE = 0.059, t = 10.585, p < .001; 95% CI [–0.706, –0.508]). Higher burnout erodes customer-oriented behaviours.

H7 – Customer Orientation → Value Co-creation. The path is positive and large (β = 0.756, SE = 0.055, t = 13.851, p < .001; 95% CI [0.667, 0.845]), indicating that stronger customer orientation is associated with substantially higher value co-creation.

Table 32 - Structural Path Coefficients (β), Bootstrapped SE, t, p, and 95% Cis (N = 131)

Path	β	SE	t	p	95% CI [LL, UL]
H1: WFC → Job Burnout	0.309	0.097	3.190	.001	[0.140, 0.460]
H2: FWC → Job Burnout	0.325	0.081	4.027	< .001	[0.187, 0.449]
H3: WFC → Value Co-Creation	–0.007	0.050	0.147	.883	[–0.086, 0.077]
H4: FWC → Value Co-Creation	–0.047	0.067	0.702	.482	[–0.149, 0.066]
H5: Job Burnout → Value Co-Creation	–0.129	0.072	1.802	.072	[–0.238, 0.008]
H6: Job Burnout → Customer Orientation	–0.625	0.059	10.585	< .001	[–0.706, –0.508]
H7: Customer Orientation → Value Co-Creation	0.756	0.055	13.851	< .001	[0.667, 0.845]

Note. β = standardized path coefficient; CI = bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) 95% confidence interval based on 5,000 bootstrap resamples.

Next, table 32 summarises the substantive interpretation of these paths.

Table 33 - Structural Path Coefficients Interpretation

Path	Interpretation
H1: WFC → Job Burnout	Moderate positive relationship; greater work-to-family conflict increases burnout.
H2: FWC → Job Burnout	Moderate positive relationship; greater family-to-work interference increases burnout.
H3: WFC → Value Co-Creation	Not significant; no direct effect of work-to-family conflict on value co-creation.
H4: FWC → Value Co-Creation	Not significant; no direct effect of family-to-work conflict on value co-creation.
H5: Job Burnout → Value Co-Creation	Negative relationship; higher burnout decreases value co-creation (p = .072, marginal).
H6: Job Burnout → Customer Orientation	Strong negative effect; higher burnout reduces customer orientation.
H7: Customer Orientation → Value Co-Creation	Very strong positive relationship; higher customer orientation enhances value co-creation.

Note. Interpretations based on standardized path coefficients (β) and p-values from bootstrapped PLS-SEM estimation.

5.2.2.3. Approximate model fit indices

Global fit measures in PLS-SEM are descriptive diagnostics that should be read alongside measurement quality (loadings, reliability, AVE, HTMT) and explanatory/predictive criteria (paths, R^2, Q^2, PLSpredict). A frequently reported index is the SRMR, an absolute misfit measure comparing observed and model-implied correlations; smaller values indicate lower residual discrepancies (Henseler et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2022; Ringle et al., 2023).

SmartPLS' global/approximate fit diagnostics for both the saturated and the estimated models are as follows (Table 33):

– SRMR = 0.087 for the estimated model, which is close to the commonly cited guideline of ≈ 0.08 (Kline, 2023; Hair et al., 2022). In PLS-SEM this is interpreted descriptively: a value slightly above .08 suggests some residual misfit, but given the strong measurement quality and the high explanatory/predictive performance in this study, it does not in itself invalidate the model.

– The saturated model SRMR (0.080) indicates that the empirical correlation matrix is reproduced well; the small increase in the estimated model reflects constraints imposed by the structural specification.

– d_ULS (4.004) and d_G (1.903) are discrepancy indices. Their proximity to the saturated-model values (3.351 and 1.885) suggests limited additional misfit due to the model structure.

Table 34 - Approximate Model Fit Indices (SmartPLS 4, N = 131)

Model	SRMR	d_ULS	d_G
Saturated Model	0.080	3.351	1.885
Estimated Model	0.087	4.004	1.903

Note. SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; d_ULS = squared Euclidean distance; d_G = geodesic distance. SRMR ≈ 0.08 indicates good model fit (Henseler et al., 2014; Hair et al., 2022).

In line with recent guidance, these indices are treated as descriptive complements rather than as strict decision criteria for PLS-SEM model adequacy.

5.2.2.4. Effect sizes (f^2) on endogenous constructs

The effect size f^2 quantifies the unique contribution of a predictor to an endogenous construct. Interpreting magnitudes follows the usual benchmarks: 0.02 = small, 0.15 = medium, 0.35 = large (Cohen, 1988). Reporting f^2 complements path significance by indicating practical impact in PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2022). Table 34 summarises the f^2 values:

Table 35 - Effect Sizes (f^2) on Endogenous Constructs (N = 131)

Predictor	Job Burnout	Customer Orientation	Value Co-Creation
Work–Family Conflict (WFC)	0.106	—	0.000
Family–Work Conflict (FWC)	0.118	—	0.006
Job Burnout	—	0.640	0.033
Customer Orientation	—	—	—

Note. $f^2 = (R^2$ included $- R^2$ excluded$) / (1 - R^2$ included$)$. Benchmarks for interpreting effect sizes: 0.02 = small, 0.15 = medium, 0.35 = large (Cohen, 1988).

Results indicate a large effect of Job Burnout on Customer Orientation ($f^2 = 0.64$), as well as a small effect of FWC ($f^2 = 0.118$) and WFC ($f^2 = 0.106$) on Job Burnout. The effects of WFC and FWC on Value Co-creation are negligible, consistent with their non-significant direct paths.

5.2.2.5. Coefficient of determination (R^2 and adjusted R^2)

In variance-based SEM, the coefficient of determination R^2 for each endogenous construct summarises the explanatory power of its predictors. The adjusted R^2 provides a more conservative estimate by taking into account the number of predictors in the model (Hair et al., 2022; Kline, 2023). While interpretation is context-dependent, conventional principles in PLS-SEM classify values around .67, .33, and .19 as substantial, moderate, and weak explanation, respectively (Hair et al., 2022).

By analysing Table 35, it is possible to conclude that:

– Value Co-creation (R^2 = 0.752; adj. R^2 = 0.744): The model explains approximately 75% of the variance in VCC, which constitutes substantial explanatory power by PLS-SEM benchmarks. This high R^2 is driven primarily by the strong positive effect of Customer Orientation on VCC.

– Customer Orientation (R^2 = 0.390; adj. R^2 = 0.385): About 39% of CO's variance is explained (moderate explanation). In our model, this is accounted for mainly by Job Burnout (negative), consistent with the view that strain undermines customer-focused behaviour.

– Job Burnout (R^2 = 0.294; adj. R^2 = 0.283): Predictors account for approximately 29% of burnout, reflecting weak-to-moderate explanation by WFC and FWC.

Adjusted R^2 values are very close to the initial R^2, indicating that the explanatory power is not inflated by the number of predictors and that the model is reasonably efficient.

Table 36 - Coefficient of Determination (R^2 and Adjusted R^2) for Endogenous Constructs (N = 131)

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2
Job Burnout	0.294	0.283
Customer Orientation	0.390	0.385
Value Co-Creation	0.752	0.744

Note. R^2 values of approximately .19, .33, and .67 represent weak, moderate, and substantial explanatory power in PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2022).

5.2.2.6. Predictive power: PLSpredict

The model's predictive ability was tested using both R^2 and Q^2. A positive Q^2 suggests that the PLS model can predict the endogenous indicators better than a naïve benchmark (Hair et al., 2022). In this study, the evaluation of Q^2 shows that all items from endogenous constructs present positive Q^2_predict values, indicating predictive relevance.

Focusing on the items of the main endogenous construct (Value Co-creation), the results show that all six items (CCV_1 to CCV_6) have Q^2_predict values larger than zero, suggesting that the PLS path model outperforms the most relevant benchmark.

To further assess predictive performance, we compare the RMSE values produced by the PLS-SEM analysis with those from a linear model (LM) benchmark. Across all six items, the PLS-SEM analysis yields smaller prediction errors (lower RMSE) than the LM (Table 36). These results indicate that the model has high predictive power in out-of-sample prediction for Value Co-creation.

Table 37 - PLS Predict: Predictive Relevance and RMSE Comparison (N = 131)

Item	Q^2predict	RMSE (PLS-SEM)	RMSE (LM Benchmark)
CCV_1	0.129	1.18	1.22
CCV_2	0.075	1.36	1.42
CCV_3	0.118	1.31	1.38
CCV_4	0.120	1.32	1.36
CCV_5	0.121	1.44	1.54
CCV_6	0.123	1.36	1.41

Note. Positive Q^2predict values indicate predictive relevance. Lower RMSE values for PLS-SEM compared with the linear model (LM) suggest superior predictive performance.

5.2.3. Mediation Analysis (Indirect Effects via Bootstrapping – PLS-SEM)

Table 37 presents the decomposition of the total, direct, and indirect effects for the mediation of Customer Orientation in the relationship between Job Burnout and Value Co-creation. The total effect of Job Burnout on Value Co-creation is negative and significant (β = −0.601, t = 9.813, 95% CI [−0.690, −0.486], p < .001).

However, it is relevant to notice that, the indirect effect via Customer Orientation is significant and negative (β = −0.472, t = 7.117, 95% CI [−0.577, −0.361], p < .001), whereas the direct effect controlling for the mediator is negative but not statistically significant at α = .05 (β = −0.129, t = 1.802, 95% CI [−0.238, 0.008], p = .072). This pattern is indicative of indirect-only (full) mediation: burnout diminishes customer orientation, and lower customer orientation, in turn, reduces value co-creation. Accordingly, the mediation hypothesis H8 is supported, while the residual direct link from burnout to value co-creation (H5) is not.

Table 38 - Effect Decomposition for the Mediation of Customer Orientation (M) in the Relationship Between Job Burnout (X) and Value Co-Creation (Y) — PLS-SEM (5,000 Bootstraps; 95% BCa CI)

Type of Effect	Nature of Effect	β	t	95% CI [LL, UL]	Sig.
Total effect	X → Y	−0.601	9.813	[−0.690, −0.486]	***
Indirect effect	X → M → Y	−0.472	7.117	[−0.577, −0.361]	***
Direct effect	X → Y (controlling for M)	−0.129	1.802	[−0.238, 0.008]	n.s.

Note. β = standardized coefficient; *** p < .001; n.s. = not significant. Variance Accounted For (VAF) = 78.5%, indicating full (indirect-only) mediation.

The Variance Accounted For (VAF) expresses the share of the total effect that is transmitted through the mediator:

$$\text{VAF} = \frac{|\text{Indirect Effect}|}{|\text{Total Effect}|} = \frac{0.472}{0.601} \approx 78.5\%.$$

With VAF ≈ 78.5%, most of Burnout's impact on Value Co-creation operates via Customer Orientation, indicating a predominantly mediated mechanism. Because the direct effect is non-significant while the indirect effect is significant, this pattern is consistent with indirect-only (full) mediation.

5.2.4. Formal Test of Indirect Effects: PROCESS Mediation Results

In addition to the latent-variable mediation estimated in PLS-SEM (SmartPLS; 5,000 bootstraps), we conducted a regression-based mediation analysis using PROCESS (Model 4; 5,000 bootstrap resamples) with observed composite scores as a robustness check. Agreement between PLS-SEM and PROCESS on the mediation pathway indicates that the result is not method-dependent and supports convergent validity; current reviews recommend such triangulation/robustness practices in PLS-SEM reporting (Richter et al., 2022).

To examine the mediation role of Customer Orientation in the Job Burnout–Value Co-creation relationship (H8), we conducted a simple mediation analysis using PROCESS v4.2 (Model 4). Estimates were obtained via ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, and inference for the mediation was based on 5,000 bootstrap resamples with 95% percentile confidence intervals. The sample comprised N = 131 respondents. In the model, Burnout was specified as the independent variable (X), Value Co-creation as the dependent variable (Y), and Customer Orientation as the mediator (M).

Table 38 reports the PROCESS regression coefficients corresponding to each path in the mediation model, (a) Burnout → Customer Orientation, (b) Customer Orientation → Value Co-creation, (c′) Burnout → Value Co-creation (controlling for M), and (c) the total effect, providing both unstandardised (B) and standardised (β) estimates, standard errors (SE), t statistics, p values, 95% CIs, and R^2. The statistical significance of the indirect effect was determined by the 95% bootstrap CIs (5,000 resamples); Table 39 summarises the total, direct, and indirect effects.

Burnout negatively predicted Customer Orientation ($\beta = -0.382$, $p < .001$), explaining 14.6% of its variance. In turn, Customer Orientation was strongly and positively associated with Value Co-creation ($\beta = 0.822$, $p < .001$). The total effect of Burnout on Value Co-creation was negative ($c = -0.545$, $\beta = -0.383$, $p < .001$), but became statistically non-significant once Customer Orientation was included ($c' = -0.098$, $\beta = -0.069$, $p = .171$), indicating that Burnout's impact on co-creation operates primarily through the mediator.

The estimated indirect effect was $a \cdot b = -0.447$, with a 95% bootstrap CI [−0.606, −0.290], confirming statistical significance. The fully standardised indirect effect was −0.314 and accounted for

approximately 82% of the total effect, a pattern consistent with full mediation: higher Burnout reduces Customer Orientation, which in turn substantially diminishes Value Co-creation.

Table 39 - Regression Coefficients for the Mediation Model (PROCESS v4.2, Model 4; N = 131)

Path	B	SE	β	t	p	95% CI [LL, UL]	R^2
Burnout → Customer Orientation (a)	−0.506	0.087	−0.382	−5.82	< .001	[−0.678, −0.334]	.146
Customer Orientation → Value Co-Creation (b)	0.883	0.063	0.822	14.02	< .001	[0.758, 1.007]	.679
Burnout → Value Co-Creation (c′, direct)	−0.098	0.071	−0.069	−1.37	.171	[−0.238, 0.041]	—
Burnout → Value Co-Creation (c, total)	−0.545	0.076	−0.383	−7.17	< .001	[−0.696, −0.395]	.147

Note.
B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error; β = standardized coefficient; CI = 95% bootstrap confidence interval (5,000 resamples).

Table 40 - Total, Direct, and Indirect Effects of Burnout on Value Co-Creation (PROCESS v4.2, Model 4; N = 131)

Type of Effect	Effect Path	B	SE	β	t	95% CI [LL, UL]	Sig.
Total Effect (c)	Burnout → Value Co-Creation	−0.545	0.076	−0.383	−7.17	[−0.696, −0.395]	***
Direct Effect (c′)	Burnout → Value Co-Creation (controlling for CO)	−0.098	0.071	−0.069	−1.37	[−0.238, 0.041]	n.s.
Indirect Effect (a×b)	Burnout → Customer Orientation → Value Co-Creation	−0.447	0.081	−0.314	—	[−0.606, −0.290]	***

Note. *** p < .001; n.s. = not significant.
Indirect effect computed with 5,000 bootstrap resamples (PROCESS v4.2).
The indirect effect accounts for ~82% of the total effect, consistent with full mediation.

5.2.5. Summary of hypotheses and results

Table 40 summarises the study's hypotheses and their empirical status based on the PLS-SEM analyses and mediation results.

Table 41 - Summary of the Study's Hypotheses and Their Results

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	Work–Family Conflict (WFC) is positively related to Job Burnout among real estate salespersons.	Supported
H2	Family–Work Conflict (FWC) is positively related to Job Burnout among real estate salespersons.	Supported
H3	Work–Family Conflict (WFC) is negatively related to Value Co-Creation in the real estate sector.	Not Supported
H4	Family–Work Conflict (FWC) is negatively related to Value Co-Creation in the real estate sector.	Not Supported
H5	Job Burnout is negatively related to Value Co-Creation in the real estate sector.	Supported
H6	Job Burnout is negatively related to Customer Orientation among real estate salespersons.	Supported
H7	Customer Orientation is positively related to Value Co-Creation among real estate salespersons.	Supported
H8	Customer Orientation mediates the relationship of Job Burnout on Value Co-Creation among real estate salespersons (indirect effect < 0).	Supported

Note. Supported hypotheses are statistically significant ($p < .05$) in the expected direction.

VI.

6. DISCUSSION

This chapter explores the interpretation and implications of the study's findings. Its aim is to contextualize these results, discuss their significance, and, finally, explore their theoretical and practical implications.

Firstly, we revisited the study's hypotheses and finalized with a concise summary of the key findings. By doing so we elucidate how the results contribute to existing knowledge and addressed gaps in the literature.

Secondly, the chapter examines the broader implications of the findings. This includes discussing how the results advance our understanding of the dynamics of WFC/FWC, Burnout, Customer Orientation, and their potential impact on Value Co-Creation real estate salespersons.

6.1. General Conclusions of the Investigation

6.1.1. Work-Family Conflict and Job Burnout (H1)

Work-to-Family Conflict positively predicts Job Burnout with a moderate effect ($\beta = 0.309$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [0.140, 0.460]). The results of our study shed crucial light on the dynamics between these two dimensions. This result underscores the strong positive relationship between work-family conflict and the experience of "burning out" among Real Estate Salespersons. Substantively, when work demands intrude on family roles, salespeople's emotional resources are depleted, elevating burnout—consistent with stress-strain perspectives in the work–family literature.

Together with FWC, the conflict antecedents account for 29% of the variance in burnout ($R^2 = 0.294$; adj. $R^2 = 0.283$), indicating weak-to-moderate explanatory power for this strain outcome. Substantively, when work demands intrude on family roles, salespeople's emotional resources are depleted, elevating burnout—consistent with stress-strain perspectives in the work–family literature.

In the real estate sector, where work dynamics are increasingly complex, and the lines between professional and personal life are more blurred than ever, these results are of the utmost importance. This study highlights a critical area of concern for organisations and individuals alike, suggesting that efforts to mitigate work-family conflict are beneficial and essential for reducing burnout and promoting overall employee health and productivity.

Although devoid of novelty, the implications of work-family conflict on burnout are significant and diverse, affecting individuals' physical and psychological health and overall well-being (Castanheira and Chambel, 2010) and poorer job outcomes (Yang et al., 2024).

The implications of WFC on burnout are vast and multifaceted. Physically, employees experiencing high WFC may suffer from stress-related health issues such as insomnia, headaches, and cardiovascular problems (Netemeyer et al., 1996). Psychologically, they may experience heightened levels of anxiety, depression and emotional exhaustion (Ganster and Rosen, 2013). These health issues affect individual well-being and reduce overall productivity and job performance (Mete et al., 2014).

The health implications of WFC are also clear in recent work: higher WFC is associated with worse mental-health indicators (e.g., anxiety, reduced self-rated health), and burnout frequently sits on the pathway from WFC to diminished health and work attitudes (Song et al., 2025).

The significant WFC → Burnout path (β = 0.309, p = .001) indicates that interventions aimed at lowering WFC are likely to reduce burnout among real-estate salespersons. The study contributes to the broader understanding of how WFC impacts employee well-being and offers practical recommendations for organisations and individuals. Future research should explore the complex dynamics of WFC and burnout, considering various moderating factors and industry-specific challenges to develop targeted interventions that enhance workplace well-being and efficiency.

6.1.2. Family Work Conflict and Job Burnout (H2)

Family–Work Conflict positively predicts Job Burnout with a moderate effect (β = 0.325, p < .001, 95% BCa CI [0.187, 0.449], 5,000 bootstraps). Together with WFC, FWC contributes to the explained variance in Burnout (R^2 = 0.294; adj. R^2 = 0.283). Thus, as FWC increases, burnout also tends to increase; the magnitude (β ≈ .33) indicates that FWC is a meaningful and statistically reliable predictor of the latent Burnout construct.

This is consistent with recent evidence showing that both family-to-work and work-to-family conflict are significant antecedents of job burnout across occupational groups (Li et al., 2024).

In short, the results of our work imply that FWC has demonstrated a significant impact on employees' burnout experiences, highlighting the need for interventions to reduce family-related conflicts and mitigate job burnout in the real estate sector.

Our results are also consistent with Azura's, (2006) study, which found that FWC significantly influenced Burnout, although less than WFC. This consistency suggests a robust relationship across different contexts and reinforces the importance of addressing family-related conflicts in mitigating Burnout.

Research by Netemeyer et al. (2005) supports our results, indicating that FWC contributes to emotional exhaustion, a key component of Burnout. Similarly, Michel et al. (2011) found that employees experiencing high levels of FWC reported more significant job stress and burnout. However, some studies, such as those by Greenhaus and Beutell, (1985), suggest that the impact of FWC can vary based on individual and organisational factors, including job role, family structure, and support systems.

Gholitabar et al., (2020) investigated FWC's influence on Burnout, and their results revealed that FWC contributed positively to employee burnout and turnover intentions, with FWC interfering significantly

with job responsibilities. Other studies have found that FWC did not significantly affect Burnout (Taylor et al., 2019), as it suggests that workaholics may sacrifice or disengage from family time or duties to prioritise work responsibilities, not allowing family time to interfere with their work. Finally, a recent reliability-generalization meta-analysis shows that the standard WFC/FWC scales yield consistently strong reliability across occupations and settings, reinforcing the robustness of our measurement in this study (Ugwu et al., 2024).

The moderate positive effect and statistical significance of FWC as a predictor of burnout emphasises that addressing FWC is essential for promoting employee well-being. Consistent with the literature examined, our key findings reinforce the robust relationship between FWC and Job Burnout in the real estate sector. Future efforts should focus on developing organisational policies and support systems that help employees balance their family and work responsibilities, thereby reducing burnout and enhancing overall job satisfaction and performance.

6.1.3. Work Family Conflict and Family Work Conflict and Value Co-Creation (H3, H4)

Despite our findings, which in the PLS-SEM structural model show no statistically significant direct association between Work-to-Family Conflict (WFC) and Value Co-Creation (VCC) ($\beta = -0.007$, $p = .883$; 95% CI includes 0), it is reasonable to expect that inter-role conflict could potentially harm a salesperson's ability to engage in value co-creation processes with customers. Since, work-family conflict refers to the stress and strain that arises from the simultaneous pressures of work and family responsibilities (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985), it can affect an individual's ill-being, absenteeism, tardiness, job satisfaction and low job involvement in various ways (Bande et al., 2019; Carballo-Penela et al., 2018).

However, the absence of a reliable direct WFC → VCC path in our SEM suggests that any deleterious influence of WFC on value co-creation likely operates indirectly — for example, by first raising burnout and then eroding customer-oriented behaviours, which in turn depress VCC (see Burnout → CO → VCC mediation). In other words, once the model explicitly includes Burnout and Customer Orientation as endogenous constructs, the direct WFC → VCC link attenuates to non-significance.

Thus, the uniqueness of the contextual selling aspect, the individual personality, the nature and severity of the conflict and the support and resources the organisation provided, were ascended over our results.

Some salespeople may develop coping mechanisms to manage work-family conflict effectively, such as impression management (IM) tactics and proactive behaviours (Bande et al., 2019), creative performance (Zhang et al., 2020), and family support (Zhang and Bowen, 2021).

Eby et al. (2005) highlight the necessity of more profound research into how specific personal circumstances influence the effects of work-family conflicts on career outcomes. Current models need to address these properly and adequately. The nature of family obligations can significantly affect an employee's self-assessment of their work performance. Parents of young children, who are expected to devote more time at home, may be especially hard on themselves when work interferes with family responsibilities. This self-criticism might be less intense for those caring for an ill family member.

Regarding Family-to-Work Conflict (FWC), the PLS-SEM results likewise indicate no significant direct effect on VCC ($\beta = -0.047$, $p = .482$; CI includes 0). This means that, in the simultaneous latent-variable model, higher FWC is not directly associated with lower value co-creation once the mediating pathway via Burnout → Customer Orientation is accounted for. As with WFC, the theoretically expected harm from FWC may still be present but channelled through upstream strain (burnout) and reduced customer orientation, rather than appearing as a standalone direct path.

As such, employees might actively manage FWC by adopting compensatory behaviours because they recognize its potential to negatively affect work. Because of this awareness, they might take steps to mitigate these effects, like better time management or setting boundaries around work hours.

In job roles like customer service, where job performance is critical and closely monitored, work pressures tend to overshadow family concerns, leading to a lesser impact of FWC on work. These dynamic highlights the significant role of awareness and external pressures in balancing work and family responsibilities. Although the real estate sector isn't typically classified as a customer service role in the traditional sense, it heavily relies on customer service skills. Real estate agents and brokers must interact with clients, understand their needs, and provide high-quality service to facilitate property transactions effectively. These interactions require excellent communication, negotiation and interpersonal skills, key components of customer service. Therefore, while real estate is more accurately described as a sales or service sector, professional’s success in this field dependents on their ability to deliver outstanding customer service.

Consisting with our results, Wang et al., (2021) explored the relationship between FWC and job performance. The findings did not indicate that FWC directly affects job performance. This implies that the negative impacts of family responsibilities on work might be more complex and influenced by other

factors, such as Caregiving policies. Under low caregiving responsibilities, FWC exhibits a strong and negative correlation with job performance. However, this adverse impact on job performance must be more pronounced among service workers with high caregiving responsibilities. Thus, FWC has a higher effect on job performance when caregiving demands are minimal when such demands are substantial.

Cultural norms and values may significantly influence perceptions of FWC. In cultures with strong family values, FWC may be more pronounced due to higher expectations for family involvement. Cross-national analyses show that country-level cultural value orientations (e.g., embeddedness vs. autonomy; hierarchy vs. egalitarianism) are systematically associated with individuals' reported FWC levels, indicating a cultural imprint on the work–family interface (Masuda et al., 2019). Moreover, contemporary work links gender role norms/attitudes — a core cultural element — to higher work–family conflict, underscoring how cultural prescriptions around caregiving (Chen et al., 2022; Hing et al., 2023).

Also, gender roles play a critical role; traditionally, women may experience more FWC due to societal expectations regarding caregiving and domestic responsibilities, whereas men might report higher WFC. In this case, organisational support, such as flexible work arrangements, can reduce WFC by allowing employees to adjust their work schedules to better fit their family responsibilities.

In this study, although the direct association between work-to-family conflict (WFC) and value co-creation was not statistically significant, important contingencies (e.g., mediators like burnout → customer orientation and moderators such as caregiving demands or supervisory support) may still shape this relationship. Further research and exploration of these dynamics, including potential moderating or mediating factors, can provide a more comprehensive understanding of how work-family conflict influences value co-creation in the sales context. As per family-work conflict and value co-creation, these insights contribute to the literature on the interface between work and family life, presenting compelling avenues for future research and tangible considerations for organisational policy development to foster optimal employee outcomes. As organisations navigate work–family integration, our SEM findings underscore the need for evidence-based policies — such as family-supportive supervision, boundary control, and flexible scheduling — to mitigate the adverse effects of family-to-work conflict on employee functioning and value creation.

Value co-creation, often conceptualized as a process where customers or employees actively participate in creating value in the business context (Jaakkola et al., 2015) can be influenced by the pressures and dynamics of an individual's work and family roles (Bosisio, et al., 2024). As such, recent studies (Lee

et al., 2023) frame value co-creation as an interactive, collaborative process in which customers and firms (and other actors) integrate resources to jointly shape value-in-use, which, in our context, this process can be influenced by the pressures and dynamics of one's work–family roles.

Therefore, it is essential to consider that effective management of work-family dynamics benefits employees well-being and has a consequential impact on their capacity to engage in constructive and innovative practices that lead to value co-creation. The ability to contribute meaningfully to one's work and personal life is a reciprocal relationship where minimising conflict in one area can enhance performance and value generation in other. The correlation underscores the need for organisations to facilitate a supportive environment that reduces work-family and family-work conflicts, fostering an atmosphere conducive to value co-creation.

6.1.4. Impact of Job Burnout on Value Co-Creation (H5)

The direct path from Job Burnout to Value Co-Creation (VCC) is negative but not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.129$, $p = .072$; 95% CI includes 0). Substantively, this indicates that, even though higher burnout is directionally associated with lower value co-creation, the evidence from the simultaneous latent-variable model is insufficient to claim a reliable direct effect on VCC. Practically, this cautions against assuming that increases in burnout will, by themselves, consistently reduce value co-creation once other determinants are modelled. The relationship appears weaker and less stable when estimated alongside the other pathways in the system.

Contemporary evidence supports our finding that, once encounter-proximal drivers are modelled, the residual direct effect of burnout on value co-creation can be small or statistically unstable, meaning that, recent work in service and work-psychology increasingly finds that burnout's impact on customer-level outcomes is not uniformly direct but tends to emerge through closer, encounter-level processes (e.g., customer-oriented behaviour, innovation in the team, emotional-labour strategies) (Montani & Diefendorff, 2020).

Our PLS-SEM results, means we should not claim that burnout, by itself, reliably lowers value co-creation once the model also accounts for the actual participatory/exchange processes through which value is created. In practice, what drives exceptional customer value and experiences are those collaborative, customer-oriented behaviours in the interaction. Burnout can still be harmful — as it can drain energy,

reduce efficacy, and foster detachment — which may show up as less attentiveness, weaker problem-solving, or poorer service quality. When that happens, value can be eroded in the encounter (often discussed as "value co-destruction"). Thus, our finding suggests that burnout's impact is registered through these encounter-level behaviours, rather than as a strong, stand-alone direct effect on value co-creation.

This perspective aligns with the view that, when employees experience burnout, they may no longer have the energy or motivation to enact the customer-facing behaviours through which value is co-created. Depleted resources—lower energy, reduced efficacy, and occasional detachment from work—can surface as less attentive interactions and poorer service quality, thereby eroding the conditions for value co-creation and, at times, leading to value co-destruction that would not arise in more positive, energised exchanges.

Value Co-Destruction occurs when the interactions between service providers and customers diminish the value for one or both parties (Wu et al., 2022). In this context, job burnout will affect salespersons by depriving them of adequate performing, which can impede the collaborative processes essential for co-creating value. This affects the employee's well-being, the customer's experience, and the overall value proposition offered by the organisation (Wu et al., 2022).

Similarly to our findings, Han et al., (2023) posit that Emotional exhaustion mediates between role overload and value co-creation behaviour. Their research demonstrates that service providers ability and willingness to engage in value co-creation decrease as emotional exhaustion increases. This finding highlights the crucial role of maintaining psychological well-being to sustain effective participation in value co-creation activities.

Recent research points out that burnout symptoms significantly affect customer satisfaction, particularly when coupled with low levels of service performance and when it is mediated by customers' perceptions of the employee's emotional states. Customers who perceive employees as burned out feel that these employees are unhappy, which in turn diminishes their overall satisfaction with the service encounter (Söderlund, 2020).

Moreover, a study from Shoshan and Sonnentag, (2020b) on the different facets of Job Burnout reveals that depersonalisation, marked by an insensitive and detached attitude, significantly harms customer perceptions of both individual employee service and the organisation. Conversely, while still negatively affecting service perceptions, emotional exhaustion can mitigate some negative impacts when customers perceive it as job-related stress rather than personal disregard. The findings underscore the

importance of addressing both burnout dimensions separately in organisational strategies to improve customer service experiences and highlight the role of customer emotions in mediating these effects.

Job Burnout can be generated by Organisational levels (job demands, low resources and poor organisational culture), individual levels (perfectionism, high personal expectations and lack of coping skills). It can lead to severe physical and mental health issues, including chronic fatigue, anxiety, depression, and reduced work performance, higher absenteeism and employee turnover (Ternik and Arnejčič, 2020).

At this point, it is relevant to point out that Job Burnout doesn't just affect the individual. Its impact often extends beyond the person experiencing it, making it a sequential process. This means that when an individual experiences burnout, it can also negatively impact their colleagues (Wu et al., 2018). As a result, Burnout can spread within a team or workplace, leading to other nefarious outcomes such as a toxic work environment, decreased productivity, and increased turnover.

Addressing burnout early is crucial to prevent it from affecting the entire team. As such, organisational interventions that adequately reduce burnout in real estate salespersons, such as adjusting workloads, enhancing job control, promoting fairness, providing social support, and aligning individuals' values with those of the organisation, would be effective in managing and preventing Burnout (Aida, 2019). Also, personal strategies such as developing coping skills (such as Customer Orientation), maintaining physical health, and seeking social support are vital in managing burnout symptoms.

Job burnout undermines the fundamental elements required for constructive and productive engagement, which adds value to all participants in the Real Estate interaction and co-creates Value.

6.1.5. Job Burnout's Influence on Customer Orientation (H6)

Job Burnout exhibits a large, negative association with the latent Customer Orientation construct (β = −0.625, $p < .001$; 5,000 bootstraps; 95% CI [−0.706, −0.508]), confirming H6. Substantively, higher burnout corresponds to markedly lower customer-oriented behaviours and attitudes among real-estate sales professionals. The predictors account for a moderate share of variance in Customer Orientation (R^2 = 0.390; adj. R^2 = 0.385), indicating that strain processes explain a meaningful portion of salespeople's capacity to sustain customer focus.

The study of Colin et al. (2023) supports our results. It investigates how job burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, and reduced personal accomplishment, negatively impacts employees' ability to maintain a customer-oriented approach. However, a strong sense of customer orientation can mitigate some of the detrimental effects of Burnout by keeping employees engaged and motivated.

In the same vein, Kang et al. (2016) research, despite hypothesizing that occupational burnout among employees would negatively affect customer orientation, indicated that it did not significantly impact customer orientation, contrary to our findings and some of the earlier research they referenced.

The research from Shu, Wei, and Peng, (2019) differentiates between functional customer orientation (FCO), which focuses on product knowledge and addressing customer needs, and relational customer orientation (RCO), which focuses on building personal relationships. Their findings indicate that FCO and RCO positively influence sales outcomes such as adaptive selling behaviour, allowing salespeople to customize their approaches to meet individual customer requirements. However, Job Burnout (through emotional exhaustion) significantly weakens these relationships, as it diminishes salespeople's capacity to effectively utilise FCO and RCO in adaptive selling.

Another study by Han et al. (2018) states that Burnout directly negatively impacts customer orientation in healthcare professionals. Nurses experiencing high levels of Burnout are less capable of engaging in behaviours that effectively meet customer needs.

Nevertheless, some studies suggest that while customer orientation can often have protective effects against Burnout, under conditions where customer demands are exceptionally high or where there is a mismatch between organisational goals and customer needs, being highly customer-oriented might actually contribute to Burnout (Ben-Zur and Yagil, 2005; Dormann and Zapf, 2004).

Furthermore, Burnout does not act in isolation but is interrelated with organisational practices, leadership strategies and the individual capacities of employees. A strategic emphasis on enhancing followership qualities within employees, providing adequate support and nurturing emotional intelligence and empathy is paramount for maintaining customer orientation.

While customer orientation can often serve as a buffer against Burnout by providing employees with a sense of purpose and satisfaction, it is not a “universal law”. Its effectiveness can vary based on a multitude of factors including individual traits, organisational culture, customer behaviour and the specific demands of the job. Organisations need to recognise these aspects and not rely solely on

promoting customer orientation but on creating supportive environments that foster employee well-being (Karatepe and Olugbade, 2009).

Customer Orientation can, therefore, act as a "double-edged sword" concerning Burnout. While customer orientation is generally viewed positively, it assumes a complex relationship with burnout. On one hand, customer orientation drives employees to engage more deeply with their work and customers, potentially enhancing job satisfaction and performance. On the other hand, it increases the emotional demands placed on employees, particularly through the requirement of emotional labour, which can lead to Burnout if not appropriately managed (Wu and Shie, 2017).

Discussions around customer orientation as a buffer against Burnout suggest practical measures, such as training programs that enhance employee skills in managing customer interactions and fostering a customer-oriented culture. These strategies are vital for organisations that maintain high customer satisfaction while protecting employee well-being. Overall, our SEM evidence indicates that burnout is a robust detractor of customer-oriented conduct. From a managerial standpoint, interventions that reduce burnout antecedents (workload, role stressors) and bolster resources (job control, recovery opportunities, supportive leadership) are likely to protect the customer-facing behaviours that matter most in real-estate sales.

6.1.6. Customer Orientation and Value Co-Creation (H7)

Customer Orientation exhibits a strong positive association with Value Co-Creation ($\beta = 0.756$, $p < .001$; 5,000 bootstraps; 95% BCa CI [0.667, 0.845]), thereby confirming H7. Substantively, sales professionals in the real-estate sector who exhibit higher levels of customer-oriented attitudes and behaviours are markedly more engaged in processes of co-creating value with their customers. The predictors account for a substantial share of variance in Value Co-Creation ($R^2 = 0.752$; adj. $R^2 = 0.744$), indicating that Customer Orientation is a dominant behavioural antecedent of value-co-creation among real-estate salespersons.

This result aligns with the growing body of recent literature emphasising that Customer Orientation is not merely an antecedent to service performance but a foundational driver of co-creation activities in service and sales contexts. For instance, Xu et al. (2024) found that frontline service employee's

customer orientation positively mediated the relationship between customer-engagement behaviours and value co-creation outcomes in a large-scale cross-industry study.

Similarly, Terblanche and Babin. (2024) reported that firms with a strong customer-oriented culture achieved higher levels of customer participation in co-creation initiatives, which in turn enhanced customer-perceived value and firm performance. Moreover, Kassemeier et al., (2022) and Itani et al., (2023) demonstrated in the hospitality industry that employees' customer orientation positively influenced customer willingness to co-create, mediated by trust and interaction quality. These findings reinforce our structural result and extend their relevance into the real estate sales context.

From a theoretical standpoint, the positive CO → VCC pathway supports the notion that customer-oriented behaviours equip sales professionals with the interpersonal resources necessary for effective collaboration with clients. Customer orientation fosters behaviours such as needs-diagnosis, solution customisation, proactive recommendation, and relationship building. These behaviours create the conditions for clients to engage more actively in the value-creation process, thereby driving mutual benefit and deeper customer involvement. In this sense, customer orientation can be conceptualised as a personal resource (following the Job Demands-Resources framework) that enables employees to engage in higher-order, co-creative behaviours even in the face of job demands.

Practically, the strong and statistically significant CO → VCC relationship underscores a vital leverage point for real estate organisations seeking to enhance value-creation outcomes via their salesforce. A salesforce development strategy that prioritises customer orientation — through hiring, training, goal-setting, and reward systems — can significantly strengthen value-co-creation capacities. In the context of the real-estate sector, where transactions are inherently relational and consultative, instilling customer-oriented competencies may lead not only to improved immediate sales outcomes but also to sustained participative value-creation, service innovation, and customer loyalty.

However, although our finding is robust, recent research suggests that the CO → VCC effect can be contingent on the quality of salesperson–customer interaction, organisational support, and digital-technology enablers of value co-creation (Li, 2022; Tuunanen, 2024), suggesting that the positive effect of customer orientation on co-creation is strengthened when employees operate within structurally empowered teams and use digital platforms suitable for customer collaboration.

Consequently, organisations should not treat customer orientation as a standalone fix but integrate it into a broader ecosystem of co-creative support (technology, process, culture). Future research may

examine moderating factors such as sales tripartite relationships (agent–client–service provider), digital co-design platforms in real estate, and customer readiness for participation.

As such, the empirical evidence in this study confirms that Customer Orientation exerts a strong positive influence on Value Co-Creation among real estate salespersons. This finding highlights the strategic importance of fostering customer-centric attitudes and behaviours as the foundation for collaborative value generation in the sales interaction. Organisations that embed customer orientation in their salesforce culture are well-positioned to harness the full potential of value-co-creation dynamics and secure sustainable competitive advantage.

6.1.7. Mediating Role of Customer Orientation on the Relationship between Job Burnout and Value Co-Creation (H8)

In the PLS-SEM structural model, Job Burnout shows a large negative association with Customer Orientation ($\beta = -0.625$, $p < .001$; 95% BCa CI [−0.706, −0.508]) and Customer Orientation strongly and positively predicts Value Co-Creation ($\beta = 0.756$, $p < .001$; 95% BCa CI [0.667, 0.845]). By contrast, the direct Burnout → VCC path is negative but not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.129$, $p = .072$; 95% BCa CI crosses zero). Consistent with these paths, the bootstrapped specific indirect effect (Burnout → CO → VCC) in SmartPLS is statistically significant (5,000 resamples), indicating that the impact of Burnout on VCC is transmitted through CO rather than operating as a stable stand-alone direct effect.

This shift suggests that while Burnout itself directly hinders Customer Orientation, it is the depletion of customer-oriented behaviours that, in turn, impairs the value co-creation process. Customer Orientation emerges not just as a buffer but as a pivotal channel through which the effects of Burnout are manifested in value co-creation outcomes.

To corroborate the regression pattern, the indirect effect was estimated with Hayes's PROCESS (Model 4; 5,000 bootstrap resamples). The mediation was statistically significant (ab = −0.447, 95% bootstrap CI [−0.606, −0.290]). The direct effect of Burnout on Value Co-Creation remained non-significant when Customer Orientation was included ($c' = -0.098$, $p = .071$), despite a negative total effect ($c = -0.545$, $p < .001$). Together, these results indicate indirect-only (full) mediation: the impact of Burnout on Value

Co-Creation operates predominantly through Customer Orientation (fully standardized indirect effect = −0.314, ≈82% of the total effect).

Recent studies converge on the same pattern: strain (emotional exhaustion) undermines the very behaviours that create value, with customer outcomes shifting mainly through those behaviours rather than via a strong direct strain - value link. For instance, emotional exhaustion reduced providers value-creation behaviours in a field setting, aligning with our structure (Jia et al., 2023).

Our findings underscore the critical role of customer orientation in mitigating the adverse effects of job burnout on value co-creation. The data implies that fostering vital customer-oriented behaviours within employees can serve as a protective mechanism, ensuring that value co-creation processes remain robust despite high Burnout levels. Organisations must, therefore, prioritise strategies that enhance customer orientation to sustain value co-creation capabilities.

Thus, customer orientation plays a pivotal role in the value co-creation process, serving as a critical component that enhances the efficacy of customer engagement and collaboration. Companies prioritising understanding and meeting customer needs are more likely to involve customers in co-creation activities, leading to more effective and personalised service outcomes (Bosisio, 2024). This customer-centric approach ensures that the products and services developed are closely aligned with customer expectations and preferences, fostering a deeper connection between the company and its customers.

High levels of customer orientation are instrumental in increasing customer engagement, which is essential for the success of co-creation efforts. Engaged customers are more willing to actively participate in the co-creation process actively, providing valuable insights and feedback that can drive innovation and improve service quality (Ranjan and Read, 2016). By fostering a strong orientation towards customer needs, companies enhance the value co-creation process and build lasting relationships with their customers, ensuring sustained engagement and mutual value creation.

Work by Babakus et al. (2009) examined the role of Customer Orientation in moderating the relationship between job demands, Burnout, and job performance among frontline bank employees. The study finds that high job demands, such as role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload, significantly contribute to higher levels of Job Burnout. Burnout, which in turn, negatively impacts job performance and increases turnover intentions. However, Customer Orientation serves as a critical mitigating factor. Employees with high customer orientation are better prepared to cope with job demands, reducing the likelihood and severity of Burnout. Customer Orientation, therefore, directly enhances job performance

and buffers the adverse effects of job demands on Burnout and job outcomes. Also, other study by Babakus, et al. (2010), went on the same path of Customer Orientation mitigation on Job Burnout. Their study suggests that Customer Orientation is a personal resource that enhances person-job fit, which mitigates Burnout. The higher the Customer Orientation, the better employees align with their roles Burnout, indicating that Customer Orientation is protective (personal resource) against Burnout.

Current evidence suggests that customer outcomes are typically proximate to process variables — team innovation, emotional-labour strategy, and customer-oriented behaviour — so once these are included, the residual direct effect of burnout tends to attenuate (Chen et al., 2024).

With a solid customer-oriented mindset, employees are better equipped with coping mechanisms, such as strategies and attitudes, that will allow them to handle demanding situations more effectively. This reduces the immediate impact of stress but also helps maintain their emotional well-being over time, thereby mitigating the overall effect of emotional exhaustion (Kim et al., 2012).

Academic research has long supported the benefits of customer orientation for salespeople. As such, Matthews et al. (2018) argue that customer orientation is as a personal resource for salespeople, guiding their job perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours.

As such, while Customer Orientation in salespeople is beneficial for creating value by fulfilling customers' needs, which can lead to higher price negotiation, achieving profitable outcomes, it also has the potential to lead to significant concessions. Customer Orientation might make salespeople focus too much on the customers' needs and pay attention to their own or company's interests when negotiating (Habel et al., 2020).

Others suggest that customer orientation could mediate the link between Emotional Intelligence and customer value co-creation behaviour. When coupled with high Emotional Intelligence, salespeople with a customer-oriented approach can better perceive and respond to customer needs, promoting customer involvement in the co-creational process (Delpechitre et al., 2018).

Thus, other personal characteristics, such as emotional intelligence, empathy and followership, can reinforce customer orientation and act as a safeguard for the value co-creation process. Emotional intelligence and empathy, particularly within salesperson-customer dyads, have been shown to foster an environment conducive to co-creation by enhancing customer participation and citizenship behaviours, which are fundamental to the co-creation of value (Delpechitre et al., 2018). These interpersonal skills and traits enable Real Estate salespeople to maintain a focus on customer needs,

stimulate stronger relationships, and encourage greater customer involvement in co-creation, even when facing job-related stress such as Job Burnout.

In Value Co-Creation, Customer Orientation should go beyond merely meeting customer needs. It should serve as a personality trait that actively engages customers emotionally and cognitively, enhancing their participation in the collaborative process of creating Value (Co-Production).

Following the academic literature examined in this thesis, some revealing light can be shed on the intricate relationship between burnout, customer orientation, and value co-creation within the real estate sector. The studies show that burnout presents a significant challenge to sustaining a customer-oriented approach, which is the foundation of value co-creation processes. However, despite the challenges posed by Burnout, the persistence of customer orientation indicates that specific fundamental dynamics enable the ongoing co-creation of value, even when salespeople are facing significant stress.

Burnout emerges, therefore, as a complex phenomenon that not only diminishes an individual's capacity for productive work but also indirectly posits as a menace to the co-creation of Value by affecting the quality of customer interactions. However, the empirical evidence also points towards an intervening influence of customer orientation. When customer orientation is deeply embedded within the organisational culture and individual disposition, it can serve as a buffer, mitigating the adverse effects of burnout on the collaborative processes essential for co-creating Value with customers.

Value co-creation and customer orientation are closely linked concepts within service management and marketing. However, as previously reported in this study's literature, they embody distinct philosophical and operational frameworks.

While Value Co-Creation and Customer Orientation advocate placing significant importance on customer needs, their scopes and applications differ. While customer orientation is essential to a business's strategy to understand and meet customer needs, value co-creation expands this interaction into a more collaborative and mutual process. Engaging customers and other stakeholders in defining their needs and creating the specific solutions that meet them represents shifting towards a more participatory, innovative and sustainable business practice into a value generation continuum.

Highly customer-oriented salespeople likelier to adopt value-based selling practices because this approach requires a deep understanding of the customer's needs and business context (Terho et al., 2015).

Customer Orientation relies on understanding and prioritising customer needs to enable salespeople to tailor their sales strategies more effectively. It forms the foundation upon which value-based selling strategies are built. In turn, the relationship between Value-Based Selling (VBS) and Value Co-Creation is synergistic. While VBS provides a powerful method for demonstrating value in monetary terms during sales interactions, it also sets the foundation for ongoing value co-creation. Once the initial sale is made, the principles of VBS can help maintain a focus on customer needs, fostering an environment of trust, mutual exchange, benefits, and openness (Jaakkola et al., 2015). This trust is critical as it encourages customers to engage more deeply in co-creation activities, providing feedback and participating in the development process essential for continual improvement and innovation (Preikschas et al., 2017).

In conclusion, the literature examined in this thesis agrees that to counter the detrimental effects of Burnout on value co-creation effectively, organisations must cultivate robust customer orientation through focused employee development, supportive organisational cultures, and targeted management strategies. This holistic approach will address the employee's well-being and ensure the ongoing collaborative engagement of customers in the value co-creation journey.

VII.

7. CONCLUSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The concluding chapter provides a detailed discussion of the findings and their implications. It is structured as follows: First, it briefly summarises the key aspects that this research addressed and the results corresponding to each research question. By aligning the outcomes of the research in the previous chapter with the initial research objectives, we elucidated how the results contribute to existing knowledge and addressed gaps in the literature.

Next, it explores the broader theoretical and managerial contributions of the dissertation. An examination of the limitations inherent in the current study follows this. Finally, the chapter offers a number of suggestions for future studies.

7.1. General Conclusions of the Research

In the introduction of this dissertation, we started by three research goals, which cover the major constructs of the proposed model. This section reviews the major findings, thereby the research objectives articulated at the very beginning are restated below:

1) Assess the effects of WFC and FWC among salespersons' Value Co-Creation in the real estate sector.

2) Assess the effect of Job Burnout on salespersons' Value Co-Creation in the real estate sector.

3) Assess whether customer orientation serves as the immediate behavioural pathway connecting burnout to value co-creation within the real estate sector.

1) What is the relationship between WFC and FWC regarding salespersons Value Co-Creation?

This research indicates that, in the PLS-SEM model, work-to-family conflict (WFC) did not exhibit a statistically significant direct effect on value co-creation (VCC) in the real estate sector. This finding is notable, as it runs counter to the initially hypothesised negative direct effect. The non-significance of WFC suggests that when a salesperson is experiencing work-family conflicts, it may not directly inhibit the salesperson's interactions with customers or their role in the value co-creation process.

In the same line, family-to-work conflict (FWC) likewise did not show a statistically significant direct effect on VCC. This suggests that—even though family pressures can plausibly impede work focus—their impact on customers' value experiences does not appear as a stand-alone direct link when the immediate, encounter-level drivers of value are represented in the model. Any adverse influence of FWC is therefore more likely to be absorbed upstream (e.g., as strain/burnout) and to register through the customer-facing behaviours that drive value, rather than as a direct path to VCC.

Taken together, our findings highlight the value of distinguishing WFC from FWC, but not because one form shows a reliably stronger direct impact on value co-creation. Neither WFC nor FWC exhibits a significant direct path to VCC once burnout and customer orientation are represented. Instead, both forms of conflict are salient as antecedents of burnout, and it is the customer-facing behaviour (customer orientation) that is the immediate driver of value co-creation.

Conceptually, this reframes value co-creation in high-interaction sales roles (such as real estate) as behaviour-proximal: work–family pressures matter to the extent that they elevate strain and thereby

erode the behaviours through which value is created, rather than exerting a uniform direct effect on value outcomes.

2) What does the evidence show about burnout and the behaviours that drive value co-creation??

Our analysis of Job Burnout in sales literature, while not entirely novel, takes a unique turn in this study. While several authors have delved into this topic before, none, to our knowledge, have connected Job Burnout with Value Co-Creation. In our PLS-SEM results, the direct path from Job Burnout to Value Co-Creation is negative but not statistically significant. Accordingly, we do not claim a reliable stand-alone direct effect in the simultaneous model, even though the coefficient's sign is consistent with theoretical expectations. This finding refines the contribution of the thesis: rather than a strong direct link, burnout's relevance for value creation in sales must be understood in relation to the immediate, encounter-level behaviours that drive customer value.

From our perspective, Job Burnout is crucial to the effectiveness of the value co-creation process, making the scarcity of studies in this area challenging to comprehend. It is clear, almost self-evident, that Job Burnout will play a crucial role in real estate salespeople when they struggle to maintain the enthusiasm and energy necessary for collaborative value creation, which is vital in sales roles that require high levels of personal interaction and relationship management competences. In practice, this strain most visibly manifests in customer-facing conduct (e.g., attentiveness, responsiveness, problem solving), which is what ultimately shapes value in the encounter. Also, salespersons who feel ineffective or unaccomplished are less likely to engage proactively with customers, missing opportunities to enhance the value creation process.

This thesis links two previously separate research areas by linking job burnout with value co-creation. The findings provide a new perspective on how psychological and emotional factors influence real estate salespersons' ability to engage in value co-creation processes. Taken together, the evidence suggests that value co-creation should be considered not only from a relational and interactional perspective but also from a psychological standpoint—where the salesperson's well-being conditions the behaviours through which value is realized—thereby affecting individual and organisational performance.

3) What is the mediator effect of customer orientation on the relationship between job burnout and value co-creation in the real estate sector.

Customer Orientation refers to a salesperson's commitment to understanding and fulfilling customer needs, creating tailored solutions, and fostering long-term relationships, as adequately addressed in the literature review chapter. The thesis findings suggest that Customer Orientation significantly mediates the relationship between Job Burnout and Value Co-Creation. When salespersons maintain a strong focus on customer needs and satisfaction, it helps preserve the value-creating behaviours required in customer encounters under burnout-related strain. This mediation occurs because a high level of Customer Orientation encourages customer-focused behaviours, even when the salesperson is experiencing Burnout. Conceptually, the relationship between Burnout and Value Co-Creation is best understood as operating through Customer Orientation rather than as a stand-alone direct link. Accordingly, the overall pattern of evidence is consistent with an indirect-only (full) mediation interpretation. This suggests that while Burnout can undermine value creation, maintaining a strong customer orientation helps sustain the behaviours through which value is co-created, even in the presence of burnout pressures.

7.2. Theoretical Contributions

This chapter aims to present the main theoretical contributions of the study within the context of existing theoretical frameworks, contributing to a deeper understanding of the relationships between WFC, FWC, Job Burnout, Customer Orientation, and Value Co-Creation. By situating the results within the broader academic field, this chapter highlights the theoretical advancements and challenges posed by this research.

As stated in the previous chapter, the results of this study support and extend several key theories in organisational behaviour and occupational health psychology. Results evidence the positive relationship between WFC and Job Burnout ($\beta \approx 0.309$; $p < .001$) aligns with role conflict theory, which posits that incompatible demands from work and family roles can lead to stress and exhaustion (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). This finding also corroborates conservation of resources (COR) theory, suggesting that the depletion of personal resources due to WFC contributes to burnout (Anand et al., 2015).

Similarly, in the PLS-SEM structural model, the significant relationship between FWC and job burnout ($\beta \approx 0.325$; $p < .001$) underscores the importance of considering conflict directions when examining their impact on employee well-being. This bidirectional approach challenges previous models that predominantly focused on WFC, highlighting the need for a more holistic understanding of work-family dynamics (Byron, 2005).

This research addresses a critical gap in the literature identified by Asiedu et al. (2018) and Byron, (2005), who highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of how Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and Family-Work Conflict (FWC) contribute to job burnout and their different impacts on organisational outcomes. Byron (2005) points out that while the bidirectional nature of work-family conflict is recognised, much of the existing research has traditionally focused on WFC, often overlooking the implications of FWC. By examining both directions of conflict, this study offers a more holistic perspective that aligns with the complexities of real-life work-family dynamics. Additionally, the findings of this thesis do not indicate a statistically significant direct effect of FWC on value co-creation; rather, family-related stressors are more likely to elevate strain (burnout) and thereby erode the customer-facing behaviours through which value is created.

Similarly, Asiedu et al. (2018) and Wen et al. (2024) emphasised the importance of understanding how these conflicts influence different dimensions of Burnout and, in turn, affect key organisational metrics such as employee turnover, performance and satisfaction. By incorporating both WFC and FWC, this

research advances the theoretical understanding and provides practical insights into how organisations can better support their employees in managing these conflicts, ultimately reducing Burnout and enhancing job performance through Value Co-Creation. By integrating these constructs into a coherent model, the study offers a comprehensive framework for future research to explore the interplay between work-family dynamics, employee well-being, and organisational effectiveness.

The thesis presents a new application of Role Theory, focusing on how conflicting responsibilities between work and family lead to job burnout and potentially negative impact on behaviours that drive Value Creation. It empirically demonstrates that Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and Family-Work Conflict (FWC) intensify burnout, which, in turn, diminishes Customer Orientation. The study emphasises the critical influence of role conflict on employee behaviour in sales environments. This innovative application of Role Theory enriches the theoretical understanding of employee performance in sales and opens new avenues for research. It invites further investigation into how role conflict influences other critical performance outcomes across diverse professional environments, such as employee engagement, organisational commitment, and customer satisfaction.

By bridging the gap between role conflict and value co-creation, the thesis provides actionable insights for organisations seeking to balance employee well-being with performance optimisation, particularly in roles requiring high interpersonal interaction and customer focus.

Furthermore, the mediated relationship between Job Burnout and Value Co-Creation through Customer Orientation adds another layer of complexity to these theoretical frameworks. In the PLS-SEM model, the direct path from Burnout to Value Co-Creation is negative but not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.129$; $p = .072$), whereas Customer Orientation shows a strong positive association with Value Co-Creation ($\beta = 0.756$; $p < .001$). Together with a significant bootstrapped indirect effect, this pattern is consistent with an indirect-only (full) mediation by Customer Orientation. Viewed through conservation of resources (COR) theory, this suggests that sustaining customer-oriented behaviours helps channel limited personal resources into the encounter-level actions that create value, so Burnout's influence on Value Co-Creation is realised through Customer Orientation rather than as a stand-alone direct effect.

Thus, the study further advances theoretical understanding by demonstrating that Customer Orientation mediates the relationship between Job Burnout and Value Co-Creation. This pattern indicates that burnout does not exert a reliable direct effect on value co-creation; rather, its influence is realised through its dampening of customer-oriented behaviour. Accordingly, fostering strong customer orientation helps preserve the encounter-level behaviours through which value is created, promoting

more effective value co-creation even when burnout pressures are present. The study further suggests that the degree to which Job Burnout has the potential to undermine Value Co-Creation depends significantly on the level of Customer Orientation maintained by the salesperson, meaning that Burnout diminishes a salespersons capacity to engage with customers effectively, thereby reducing their customer orientation and subsequent value co-creation efforts.

This finding enriches the literature on service-dominant logic and resource integration theory by providing empirical evidence of customer orientation's buffering role in the burnout-value co-creation dynamic. Also, this fact points this research to address a critical gap in the literature identified by Ozduran et al. (2023), who highlighted the need for a deeper understanding of how job burnout would impact customer orientation behaviours specially given prior works that emphasised the protective nature of Customer Orientation (Babakus and Yavas, 2012).

Considering the importance of customer orientation and the high levels of job burnout among salespersons, this thesis promotes a greater understanding of how these factors interact, contributing significantly to strategies for reducing employee burnout in the sales industry.

Furthermore, this study explores the lived experiences of salespersons in the real estate sector to explain how WFC and FWC contribute to employee job burnout and affect customer orientation and value co-creation. As a result, while salespersons reactive behaviours to the emotional demands of their jobs are related to WFC, FWC and job burnout, the context in which these interactions occur remains limited. Therefore, this study considers a mediating variable that explains the relationship between Job Burnout and Value Co-Creation.

Additionally, the thesis contributes to the Service-Dominant Logic by demonstrating how psychological factors, like Burnout, and contextual factors, like WFC and FWC, influence with value co-creation. Traditionally, S-D Logic has focused on interacting service providers and customers in creating value. However, this study introduces the idea that the psychological state of the service provider (in this case, the salesperson) is a critical determinant of the effectiveness of these interactions. This perspective could lead to a broader interpretation of S-D Logic, incorporating internal factors such as employee well-being into the co-creation framework.

By focusing on the real estate sector, the thesis provides industry-specific insights into how WFC, FWC, Job Burnout, Customer Orientation and Value Co-Creation combine. This contributes to the limited research on real estate sales, offering a theoretical basis for understanding the unique challenges salespersons face in this sector.

7.3. Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have several practical implications for managers in the real estate sector. Given the significant impact of WFC and FWC on Job Burnout, organisations should prioritize strategies to mitigate these conflicts. These strategies are well documented in the literature. As an example, implementing flexible work arrangements (Ozduran et al., 2023), such as remote work options and flexible scheduling (Peasley et al., 2020), can help employees balance their work and family responsibilities more effectively, thereby reducing burnout.

Managers should also focus on fostering a customer-oriented culture within their organisations. Training programs that enhance employees' customer service skills (Xia and Ha, 2021) and empathy (Eberechukwu, 2017; Stock and Hoyer, 2005) can strengthen customer orientation, which, as this study shows, can buffer the negative effects of burnout on value co-creation. By promoting a customer-centric approach, organisations can maintain high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty (Habel et al., 2020), even in the face of employee burnout.

Additionally, providing robust support systems, such as employee assistance programs and mental health resources, can help employees cope with stress and prevent burnout (Wu et al., 2018). Moreover, encouraging open communication (Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012) and offering support for employees dealing with family-related issues can further alleviate the pressures contributing to WFC and FWC (Eby et al., 2005).

Another relevant point as a managerial contribution is the recruitment and retention of highly customer-oriented salespersons, which is a managerial imperative. Although Customer Orientation is conceptualized as a personality trait in this study, it may be possible to develop customer-oriented behaviours.

As such, Customer Orientation, a surface-level personality trait, encompasses dispositional and behavioural components (Kassemeier et al., 2022). The dispositional aspect refers to an employee's inherent tendency to prioritize customer needs, while the behavioural component involves the actions that manifest this orientation in daily interactions. Given this dual nature, managers must recognize that while the dispositional traits may be innate, the behavioural aspects can be cultivated and enhanced. Therefore, managers are strongly advised to implement comprehensive training programs designed to reinforce and improve customer-oriented behaviours among the real estate sales staff.

Because value co-creation depends on employees' motives and resources, organisations should resource customer orientation (recognition, development, supportive supervision) to protect value creation under strain (Amin et al., 2024).

7.4. Limitations and Future Research

Like every research study, this dissertation has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. More precisely, limitations inherent to the sample size, the existence of other potential job-related stressors known to cause Job Burnout, and the complex influence between Customer Orientation and Job Burnout may limit the results of this study. Moreover, as we deepen our understanding of the factors influencing salesperson value co-creation, this study, like others, presents certain limitations and opens great opportunities for future research.

Firstly, these results were based on a single country and sector. This study was conducted in Portugal and on Real Estate agencies nationwide, and thus, the generalizability of our results must be dealt with caution. For cross-validation purposes, exploring the relationships needs to be extended beyond the sample reported in this study. Future research also needs to be conducted regarding other service contexts, as one of the main limitations of this study is the need for more documents that correlate with the real estate sector.

Secondly, the study primarily examines Value co-creation from the salesperson's perspective. Incorporating the viewpoints of both the organisation and the customers, could offer a more comprehensive understanding. Future research should consider the salesperson's and customers' perspectives to achieve a balanced and detailed view of the topic. Moreover, taking advantage of the opportunity, the emphasis on assessing Value from a customer perspective rather than a corporate perspective has increased significantly (Bosisio, 2024). This shift underscores the importance of understanding customer perceptions of Value, which is crucial for comprehending the impact of customer involvement in the value co-creation process. As stated before, our study examines explicitly the self-perceptions of real estate salespeople regarding their role in generating value co-creation. While this focus provides valuable insights into how salespeople view their contributions, it introduces limitations due to potential biases in self-reported data. Recognising these limitations highlights the need for further research incorporating multiple perspectives, including those of customers and objective

performance metrics, to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the value co-creation process in the real estate sector.

Thirdly, several salesperson-level variables, such as emotional intelligence, knowledge, and creativity, as well as sales technology usage, might trigger value co-creation or moderate (intensify or reduce) the strength of the relationships found. In addition, this study ignored the impact of personality traits, such as the big-five personality traits, such as the Big Five personality traits (Five-Facto Model – FFM), on research results. Therefore, future work can add personality traits into the study and investigate the different responses to Job Burnout and Value Co-Creation under the influence of personality traits.

Fourthly, at some point, real estate brokers (managers) were solely responsible for disseminating the questionnaire within the agency, meaning that the brokers coordinated the data collection. Although anonymity and confidentiality were assured by the study, receiving a questionnaire from the agency manager (and sometimes the owner) may have had a dissuasive effect, where some salespersons may have responded under the condition of perceived pressure or fear of potential repercussions, potentially influencing the authenticity of their responses. Gathering data directly from real estate salespersons is advisable for future studies.

Fifthly, other outcomes, such as customer satisfaction should be considered. For example, do customers notice when employees become emotionally exhausted, and does this impact their level of satisfaction with the organisation?

Sixthly, future research can include many other antecedents that might positively or negatively impact Job Burnout. By investigating antecedents such as ethical climate, creativity, locus of control, autonomy, emotional intelligence, engagement, organisational citizenship behaviour, and motivation, a better understanding of what causes a salesperson to become burned out can be determined. Due to the bidirectional complexity of the relationship, it would be interesting to consider the antecedent to job burnout as the salesperson's customer orientation, as mentioned in previous studies. More knowledge on the impacts of Job Burnout on Value Co-Creation will become more evident.

Seventhly, future research can build on this work to explore sector-specific strategies for managing burnout and enhancing value co-creation. Moreover, future research could examine the application of Dual Concern Theory in understanding how real estate salespersons balance self-concern (personal interests) and other concerns (customer needs) in the face of WFC, FWC, and Job Burnout.

Additionally, Byron, (2005) review suggests that family domain variables, such as the number of children and the age of younger children, are strongly related to FWC (more than to WFC). This indicates that

family responsibilities, particularly those related to the care of younger children and the number of dependents, predominantly affect how family life interferes with work commitments.

Age is a crucial variable in understanding the dynamics of WFC and Job Burnout because it intersects with various personal, professional, and health-related factors. Analysing age-related differences allows for a holistic understanding of the challenges faced by real estate salespersons and supports the development of effective, targeted interventions to enhance their well-being and productivity.

Lastly, longitudinal studies could examine how fluctuations in WFC, FWC, and Job Burnout over time influence the relationship between self-concern and other concerns, potentially leading to more targeted interventions and sustainable success in the real estate industry.

Although research on the dynamics between customer orientation and job burnout is still developing, this study provides valuable insights into how customer orientation can influence and influence burnout, particularly in value co-creation contexts. Understanding how customer orientation can mitigate burnout or be impaired by it is crucial for firms aiming to enhance their competitive edge through value co-creation. Managers should focus in fostering a supportive organisational climate, developing resilience against burnout, and tailoring strategies to their unique organisational contexts to maintain practical customer orientation and optimise value co-creation.

VIII.

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IX.

APPENDICES

APPENDICE 1 - Email sent to the Real Estate Agencies/Agents

Pedido de participação em Tese de Doutoramento

De Simão Nuno Almeida de Soares Machado <simao.machado@u .pt>
Data qui, 22/06/2023 11:02
Para ;)@century21.pt <. @century21.pt>

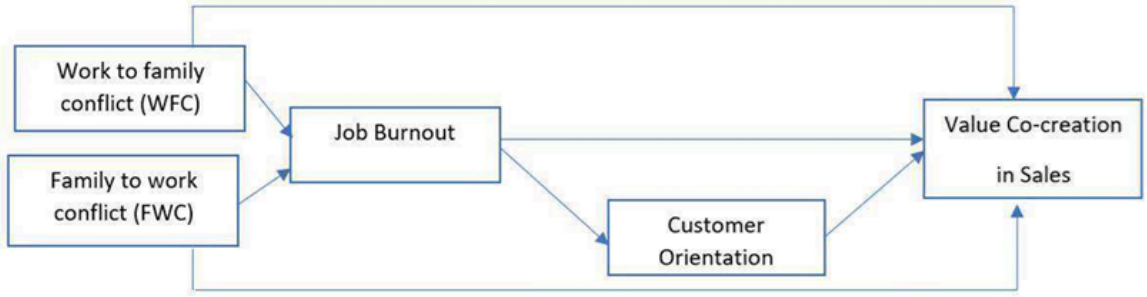
Bom dia,

O meu nome é Simão Machado e encontro-me, neste momento, a terminar a minha tese de doutoramento sobre o setor imobiliário e a saúde emocional dos consultores imobiliários.

Trata-se de um estudo pioneiro realizado em Portugal e que conta com a colaboração da ASMIP. Através do QR Code ou Link abaixo, poderão responder ao questionário. É um estudo que se propõe a avaliar o estado emocional dos consultores imobiliários em Portugal e os resultados deste estudo ajudarão as empresas a explorarem boas práticas de forma a gerir a inteligência emocional dos seus consultores. É um estudo pioneiro em Portugal.

>> Em jeito de contextualização sobre o estudo, dedico de seguida umas palavras sobre a ideia geral do projeto <<

Em suma, o modelo teórico irá procurar demonstrar uma base conceptual para a investigação: Conflito Trabalho-Familia (Stress gerado por causas laborais), Conflito Familia-Trabalho (Stress gerado por causas pessoais), o Burnout, a Orientação para o Cliente (traço da personalidade) e a Cocriação de Valor no contexto imobiliário.



O questionário estará disponível online através de um link ou QR Code e é composto por apenas 35 questões onde as pessoas terão de responder de 1 a 7 o quão se identificam com o que aquela questão propõe. São **totalmente anónimos** e os dados recolhidos por estes questionários não serão tratados para mais fim nenhum que não o tratamento estatístico para a realização da Tese.
Demora cerca de 7 a 8m a responder.

Para aceder, basta que as pessoas cliquem no link abaixo ou no QR Code em anexo:
https://forms.gle/9i5nPH29YV8xuqqp7

SCAN ME

Simão Machado

APPENDICE 2 - Email sent to ASMIP Vice-President - Mr. Francisco Bacelar

Reunião ASMIP - IPAM

De Simão Nuno Almeida de Soares Machado <simao.machado@u .pt>
Data dom, 30/04/2023 16:35
Para francisco.bacelar@asmip.pt <francisco.bacelar@asmip.pt>

1 anexos (285 KB)
frame.png;

Estimado Francisco Bacelar,

Obrigado pela disponibilidade em reunir comigo e também pela possibilidade em me ajudar nesta fase tão importante da minha vida.
Gostaria de resumir os pontos que falamos na nossa reunião da passada sexta-feira:

1. Seria muito importante, senão crucial, a ajuda da ASMIP nesta fase muito importante do meu trabalho de doutoramento na UM, através da partilha do QR Code numa das sessões de formação protagonizadas pela Associação ou a partilha através de Mailing do QR Code ou Link para responder ao questionário. Após a conclusão será, quanto a mim, um estudo muito interessante para partilhar depois com os associados os resultados para que se explorem boas práticas de forma a gerir a inteligência emocional dos consultores imobiliários. É um estudo pioneiro em Portugal.

>> Para relembrar o que estou a estudar dedico de seguida umas palavras sobre a ideia geral do projeto <<

Permita-me ilustrar em que consiste a minha tese através de um esquema conceptual bastante elucidativo:
Em suma, o modelo teórico irá procurar demonstrar uma base conceptual para a investigação: Conflito Trabalho-Familia (Stress gerado por causas laborais), Conflito Familia-Trabalho (Stress gerado por causas pessoais), o Burnout, a Orientação para o Cliente (traço da personalidade) e a Cocriação de Valor no contexto imobiliário.

APPENDICE 3 – Pre-Test

CONFLITO TRABALHO-FAMÍLIA E CONFLITO FAMÍLIA-TRABALHO, BURNOUT, ORIENTAÇÃO PARA O CLIENTE E COCRIAÇÃO DE VALOR NO CONTEXTO DA VENDA: UM ESTUDO EMPÍRICO

O presente questionário enquadra-se numa investigação no âmbito do Doutoramento em Marketing e Estratégia da Universidade do Minho. Baseando-se na teoria da cocriação de valor, este estudo constrói um modelo que explora como a cocriação de valor de um profissional de vendas do setor imobiliário em Portugal pode ser conjuntamente afetada pelo burnout, conflito trabalho-família e orientação para o cliente.

Para completar o questionário serão precisos cerca de 8 minutos. As respostas são anónimas e confidenciais, usadas apenas para esta investigação académica e para nenhum outro fim. A qualidade deste trabalho depende da sinceridade das suas respostas.

Com as suas respostas a este questionário, declara que dá um consentimento informado à sua participação, sendo esta voluntária e autoriza a utilização das suas respostas para a investigação em curso.

Obrigada pela disponibilidade e colaboração,

Simão Machado

Se desejar saber mais informações sobre esta investigação, contacte-me através do meu e-mail: machado.simao@gmail.com

QUESTIONÁRIO

DADOS DEMOGRÁFICOS

1.1 Idade?

1) 18 – 25 anos ☐ 2) De 26 - 35 ☐ 3) De 36 - 45 anos ☐ 4) 46-55 anos ☐ 5) >56 anos ☐

1.2 Concelho de Residência _____

1.3 Sexo

1) Masculino ☐ 2) Feminino ☐

1.4 Qual o seu grau de escolaridade (grau de escolaridade concluído)?

1) Básico ☐ 2) Secundário ☐ 3) Licenciatura ☐ 4) Mestrado ☐
5) Mestrado ☐ 6) Doutoramento ☐ 7) Outra Situação? Qual _____

1.5 Estado Civil?

1) Divorciado(a)/Separado(a) ☐ 2) Solteiro(a) ☐ 3) Casado/União de Facto ☐ 4) Viúvo ☐

1.6 Tem filhos a seu cargo?

1) Sim ☐ 2) Não ☐ Se sim, quantos filhos_____

2) **Qual a Idade do(s) seu(s) filho(s)?**

1) Até 5 anos ☐ 2) 6 – 9 anos ☐ 3) 10-12 anos ☐ 4) 13-18 ☐ 5) >18 anos ☐

1.7 Tem Idosos a seu cargo?

1) Sim ☐ 2) Não ☐ 3) Se sim, quantos _____ 4) Outros Dependentes, especifique_____

1.8 Qual o número de horas de trabalho semanais:

1) < 35 horas ☐ 2) 35 horas ☐ 3) 36 – 40 Horas ☐ 4) > 40 horas semanais ☐

2.0 É frequente trabalhar aos fins de semana e feriados?

1) Sim ☐ 2) Quantas vezes o fez no último mês? _____ 3) Não ☐

2.1. Tem empregada Doméstica?

1) Sim ☐ 2) Não ☐ 3) Outro tipo de serviços domésticos/familiares contratados habitualmente. Especifique_____

2.2 Qual o contrato de trabalho que tem neste momento (vínculo contratual com a imobiliária):

1) Contrato de Trabalho Permanente ☐ 2) Contrato de Trabalho Temporário ☐ 3) Outra Modalidade. Qual_____

2.3 Qual a sua modalidade ou regime de trabalho atual?

1) Empregado em Regime de tempo parcial ☐ 2) Empregado em Regime de tempo integral ☐
3) Prestador de Serviços ☐ 4) Outra modalidade. Qual _____

2.4 Quantos colaboradores exercem funções na empresa/Agência?

1) < 5 ☐ 2) 6 – 10 ☐ 3) 11 – 15 ☐ 4) > 15
2) Quanto são homens? _____ 2) Quantos são mulheres? _____

	Escala: **Reduced Maslach Burnout Inventory**	
	Autores: Rutherford, Hamwi, Friend, & Hartmann, (2011)	

Para cada pergunta abaixo, circule o número à direita
que melhor se adapta à sua opinião sobre o assunto.
Use a escala abaixo para corresponder à sua opinião.

Questões	Burnout no Trabalho						
	Nunca	Muito Poucas Vezes	Poucas Vezes	Por vezes	Frequente	Muito Frequente	Sempre
11- Sinto-me vazio(a) emocionalmente, por causa do meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12- Sinto-me fatigado(a) quando acordo de manhã e tenho que enfrentar mais um dia de trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13- Sinto-me esgotado(a) devido ao meu emprego.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14- Sinto-me frustrado(a) com o meu emprego	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15- Sinto que estou a influenciar positivamente a vida de outras pessoas com o meu emprego	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16- Sinto-me entusiasmado(a) depois de trabalhar de perto com os meus clientes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17- Consegui realizar muitas coisas importantes nesta profissão.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18- Sinto que trato alguns clientes como se fossem objetos impessoais	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19- Tornei-me mais insensível com as pessoas desde que comecei a exercer esta profissão	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20- Não me interessa realmente o que acontece a alguns clientes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Escala: **Work-Family Conflict e Family-Work Conflict**	
	Autores: (Netemeyer, Maxham, & Pullig, 2005)	

Para cada pergunta abaixo, circule o número à direita
que melhor se adapta à sua opinião sobre o assunto.
Use a escala abaixo para corresponder à sua opinião.

Questões	Work-Family Conflict | Family-Work Conflict						
	Nunca	Muito Poucas Vezes	Poucas Vezes	Por vezes	Frequente	Muito Frequente	Sempre
1- As exigências do meu trabalho interferem na minha vida familiar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2- Devido à quantidade de tempo que dedico ao trabalho, tenho dificuldade em cumprir com responsabilidades familiares	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3- Por causa das exigências do meu trabalho, não consigo fazer as coisas que quero fazer em casa	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4- As pressões geradas pelo meu trabalho, tornam difícil fazer mudanças nos meus planos para atividades familiares	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5- Em função do meu trabalho, eu tenho de fazer mudanças nos meus planos de atividades familiares.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6- As exigências da minha família interferem nas minhas atividades de trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7- Eu preciso de adiar atividades de trabalho devido às exigências que surgem no meu tempo em casa	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8- Devido às exigências da minha família, não consigo fazer coisas que preciso no trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9- A minha vida doméstica interfere nas minhas responsabilidades no trabalho (Ex: chegar a horas aos compromissos, cumprir as tarefas diárias e cumprir com a jornada de trabalho)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10- As pressões geradas pela minha família interferem no meu desempenho no trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Escala: **Orientação ao Cliente**	
	Autoras: Saxe & Weitz (1982) adapted by Stock and Hoyer (2005) and Kassemeier, Alavi, Habel, & Schmitz, (2022)	

Para cada pergunta abaixo, circule o número à direita
que melhor se adapta à sua opinião sobre o assunto.
Use a escala abaixo para corresponder à sua opinião.

Questões	Orientação ao Cliente						
	Nunca	Muito Poucas Vezes	Poucas Vezes	Por vezes	Frequente	Muito Frequente	Sempre
10- Tento descobrir quais são as necessidades de um cliente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11- Tenho em mente os melhores interesses do cliente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12- Ofereço produtos aos clientes, que satisfaçam as suas necessidades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13- Recomendo produtos ou soluções aos clientes, que são ideais para resolver os problemas dos clientes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14- Considero-me muito orientado para o cliente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15- Gosto de interagir com os clientes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16- A orientação para o cliente é um dos meus objetivos pessoais	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17- A orientação para o cliente é muito importante no meu trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18- Sempre tenho em mente o melhor interesse dos clientes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Escala: **Co-Criação de Valor**	
	Autores: O'Cass & Ngo, (2012)	

Para cada pergunta abaixo, circule o número à direita
que melhor se adapta à sua opinião sobre o assunto.
Use a escala abaixo para corresponder à sua opinião.

Questões	Co-Criação de Valor						
	Nunca	Muito Poucas Vezes	Poucas Vezes	Por vezes	Frequente	Muito Frequente	Sempre
7- Interajo com os clientes para melhor atendê-los	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8- Trabalho em conjunto com os clientes para produzir ofertas que os mobilizam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9- Interajo com os clientes para projetar ofertas (Produtos e Serviços) que atendam às suas necessidades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10- Fornecemos produtos para e em conjunto com os clientes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11- Cooptamos pelo envolvimento do cliente na prestação de produtos para eles.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12- Fornecemos aos clientes sistemas de suporte para ajudá-los a obter mais valor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

FIM DO QUESTIONÁRIO

Muito Obrigado pela sua Colaboração

APPENDICE 4 – Final Questionnaire

QUESTIONÁRIO

O presente questionário enquadra-se numa investigação no âmbito do Doutoramento em Marketing e Estratégia da Universidade do Minho.

Para completar o questionário serão precisos cerca de 8 minutos. As respostas são anónimas e confidenciais, usadas apenas para esta investigação académica e para nenhum outro fim. A qualidade deste trabalho depende da sinceridade das suas respostas.

Com as suas respostas a este questionário, declara que dá um consentimento informado à sua participação, sendo esta voluntária e autoriza a utilização das suas respostas para a investigação em curso.

Obrigada pela disponibilidade e colaboração,

Simão Machado

Se desejar saber mais informações sobre esta investigação, contacte-me através do meu e-mail: tesedoutoramentoum@gmail.com

QUESTIONÁRIO

1.1 Idade?

1) 18 – 25 anos ☐ 2) De 26 - 35 ☐ 3) De 36 - 45 anos ☐ 4) 46-55 anos ☐ 5) >56 anos ☐

1.2 Concelho de Residência _____

1.3 Sexo

1) Masculino ☐ 2) Feminino ☐ 3) Não Definido ☐

1.4 Qual o seu grau de escolaridade (grau de escolaridade concluído)?

1) Básico (9º Ano) ☐ 2) Secundário (12º Ano) ☐ 3) Licenciatura ☐
4) Mestrado ☐ 6) Doutoramento ☐

1.5 Estado Civil?

1) Divorciado(a)/Separado(a) ☐ 2) Solteiro(a) ☐ 3) Casado/União de Facto ☐ 4) Viúvo ☐

1.6 Tem filhos a seu cargo?

1) Sim ☐ 2) Não ☐ Se sim, quantos filhos_____

2) **Qual a Idade do(s) seu(s) filho(s)?**
   1) Especifique a Idade do seu filho:
   2) Especifique a Idade do seu filho:
   3) Especifique a Idade do seu filho:
   4) Especifique a Idade do seu filho:
   5) Especifique a Idade do seu filho:

1.7 Tem Idosos a seu cargo?

1) Sim ☐ 2) Não ☐ 3) Se sim, quantos _____

1.8 Qual o número de horas de trabalho semanais:

1) < 35 horas ☐ 2) 35 horas ☐ 3) 36 – 40 Horas ☐ 4) > 40 horas semanais ☐

2.0 Com que frequência trabalha aos fins de semana e feriados? No ultimo mês trabalhou:

1) Todos os Fins de Semana ☐ 2) 2-3 Fins de Semana ☐ 3) 1 Fim de semana ☐ 4) Não trabalhei ☐

2.1. Tem ajuda com as atividades domésticas?

1) Não tenho ajuda ☐ 3) Tenho ajuda de familiares ☐ 3) Tenho um serviço pago. Se sim, com que frequência (**dias por semana**)? _____

2.2 Quantos colaboradores exercem funções na Agência?

1) < 5 ☐ 2) 6 – 10 ☐ 3) > 11

Para cada pergunta abaixo, circule que melhor se adapta à sua opinião sobre o assunto. Use a escala abaixo para corresponder à sua opinião.

Questões							
	Nunca	Muito Poucas Vezes	Poucas Vezes	Por vezes	Frequente	Muito Frequente	Sempre
11- Sinto-me vazio(a) emocionalmente, por causa do meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12- Sinto-me fatigado(a) quando acordo de manhã e tenho que enfrentar mais um dia de trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13- Sinto-me esgotado(a) devido ao meu emprego.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14- Sinto-me frustrado(a) com o meu emprego	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15- Sinto que estou a influenciar positivamente a vida de outras pessoas com o meu emprego	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16- Sinto-me entusiasmado(a) depois de trabalhar de perto com os meus clientes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17- Consegui realizar muitas coisas importantes nesta profissão.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18- Sinto que trato alguns clientes como se fossem objetos impessoais	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19- Tornei-me mais insensível com as pessoas desde que comecei a exercer esta profissão	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20- Não me interessa realmente o que acontece a alguns clientes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Questões							
	Nunca	Muito Poucas Vezes	Poucas Vezes	Por vezes	Frequente	Muito Frequente	Sempre
1- As exigências do meu trabalho interferem na minha vida familiar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2- Devido à quantidade de tempo que dedico ao trabalho, tenho dificuldade em cumprir com responsabilidades familiares	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3- Por causa das exigências do meu trabalho, não consigo fazer as coisas que quero fazer em casa	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4- As pressões geradas pelo meu trabalho, tornam difícil fazer mudanças nos meus planos para atividades familiares	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5- Em função do meu trabalho, eu tenho de fazer mudanças nos meus planos de atividades familiares.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6- As exigências da minha família interferem nas minhas atividades de trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7- Eu preciso de adiar atividades de trabalho devido às exigências que surgem no meu tempo em casa	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8- Devido às exigências da minha família, não consigo fazer coisas que preciso no trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9- A minha vida doméstica interfere nas minhas responsabilidades no trabalho (Ex: chegar a horas aos compromissos, cumprir as tarefas diárias e cumprir com a jornada de trabalho)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10- As pressões geradas pela minha família interferem no meu desempenho no trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Questões							
	Nunca	Muito Poucas Vezes	Poucas Vezes	Por vezes	Frequente	Muito Frequente	Sempre
10- Tento descobrir quais são as necessidades de um cliente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11- Tenho em mente os melhores interesses do cliente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12- Ofereço produtos aos clientes, que satisfaçam as suas necessidades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13- Recomendo produtos ou soluções aos clientes, que são ideais para resolver os problemas dos clientes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14- Considero-me muito orientado para o cliente	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15- Gosto de interagir com os clientes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16- A orientação para o cliente é um dos meus objetivos pessoais	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17- A orientação para o cliente é muito importante no meu trabalho	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18- Sempre tenho em mente o melhor interesse dos clientes	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Questões							
	Nunca	Muito Poucas Vezes	Poucas Vezes	Por vezes	Frequente	Muito Frequente	Sempre
7- Interajo com os clientes para melhor atendê-los	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8- Trabalho em conjunto com os clientes para produzir ofertas que os mobilizam.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9- Interajo com os clientes para projetar ofertas (Produtos e Serviços) que atendam às suas necessidades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10- Fornecemos produtos para e em conjunto com os clientes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11- Envolvemos os nossos clientes no fornecimento de produtos para eles.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12- Fornecemos aos clientes sistemas de suporte para ajudá-los a obter mais valor.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

FIM DO QUESTIONÁRIO

Muito Obrigado pela Colaboração