Article

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Occupational Burnout and Psychological Well-Being Among Journalists in Spain and Germany

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Abstract

Background: Journalism is a high-demand occupation characterised by sustained time pressure, emotional demands, and exposure to potentially distressing events, making occupational burnout and psychological well-being important concerns. This study examined psychological and occupational well-being and burnout-related indicators among journalists in Spain and Germany, focusing on country and gender differences.

Methods: This study employed a cross-sectional design. The participants comprised 227 professional journalists (Spain: n = 115; Germany: n = 112; 108 men and 119 women) recruited via non-probability convenience sampling. Workplace well-being, global life satisfaction, happiness, professional quality of life, and burnout were assessed using standardised questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlations, and independent-sample t-tests were performed. Welch's correction was used when required and Holm's procedure was applied to families with multiple comparisons. Effect sizes were expressed as Cohen's d with 95% confidence intervals.

Results: The mean Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) total score was 15.61 (standard deviation [SD] = 2.76), while mean scores were 31.22 (SD = 6.30) for compassion satisfaction, 24.75 (SD = 6.20) for Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) burnout and 20.94 (SD = 13.43) for Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) emotional exhaustion. Workplace resources were positively associated with happiness in the current position (r = 0.57 to 0.74, Holm-adjusted $p < 0.001$). ProQOL burnout and emotional exhaustion were negatively associated with well-being indicators (r = –0.62 to –0.29, Holm-adjusted $p < 0.001$). No statistically significant country differences were identified and the effect sizes were negligible or small. After Holm's adjustment, women reported higher compassion satisfaction (mean [M] = 33.30, SD = 5.50 vs. M = 28.92, SD = 6.36; d = –0.74), ProQOL burnout (M = 26.59, SD = 5.86 vs. M = 22.67, SD = 6.02; d = –0.66) and emotional exhaustion (M = 24.52, SD = 13.84 vs. M = 16.92, SD = 11.97; d = –0.59).

Conclusions: In this non-probability sample, positive occupational and psychological indicators coexisted with burnout-related strain. The results indicate associations rather than causal effects, and highlight the need for further longitudinal and country-adjusted research on journalists' occupational health.

Keywords

workplace well-being; burnout; journalists; psychosocial risks; emotional exhaustion

Introduction

Journalism is characterised by sustained time pressure, emotional demands, changing professional routines, and exposure to potentially distressing events [1,2]. These characteristics make occupational well-being and burnout particularly relevant concerns for journalists, with previous

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research documenting stress-, burnout-, and trauma-related responses across different journalistic settings [3–5]. In more specific contexts involving the coverage of war, conflict, and other potentially traumatic events, studies have documented post-traumatic stress and related mental health outcomes [6–8].

At the same time, journalistic work may also involve autonomy, professional engagement, and rewarding experiences, indicating that positive evaluations of work and occupational strain are not necessarily mutually exclusive [9]. Understanding journalists' occupational health, therefore, requires attention not only to adverse outcomes but also to the resources and positive psychological experiences that may coexist with them.

The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) framework provides a useful perspective for examining this coexistence. According to this model, occupational demands and resources contribute to employees' strain and motivational experiences through partially distinct processes [10]. Sustained demands may contribute to exhaustion, whereas resources such as autonomy, role clarity, managerial support, satisfactory working conditions, and social support may favour more positive occupational experiences. In journalism, recent research has highlighted the relevance of workload, time pressure, emotionally demanding assignments, and the availability of social and organisational support for journalists' stress and well-being [1,2,11]. Recent journalist-specific research further indicates that the role of occupational resources may be context dependent; organisational support may be associated with lower burnout, while resources such as autonomy do not necessarily operate uniformly as protective factors [12]. Importantly, occupational resources do not necessarily imply the absence of burnout-related strain, particularly when demand remains sustained [10].

Occupational and psychological well-being are both multidimensional. Workplace well-being refers to the evaluation of occupational conditions and experiences, whereas global life satisfaction reflects a broader cognitive evaluation of one's life [13–15]. Happiness represents a related but broader positive psychological construct, while burnout is recognised in the International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision (ICD-11) as an occupational phenomenon associated with chronic unmanaged work-related stress and characterised by exhaustion, increased mental distance or cynicism, and reduced professional efficacy [16]. Distinguishing these constructs makes it possible to examine whether favourable occupational and psychological evaluations coexist with indicators of occupational strain, rather than treating well-being and burnout as opposite ends of a single continuum.

Research on journalists has increasingly examined occupational stress, exposure to trauma, burnout, and psychosocial working conditions. Previous research has identified workload, working hours, and time pressure as relevant stressors among journalists [1,17], whereas social and organisational support has been associated with more favourable well-being and lower stress reactions [2,11]. Recent studies have also highlighted the relevance of precarious working conditions, organisational environments, and support systems for journalists' mental health and job satisfaction [18,19]. However, the literature remains fragmented regarding outcomes and research contexts. Systematic evidence indicates substantial heterogeneity in how burnout, occupational demands, resources, and coping processes have been examined in journalism [5], while other studies have focused on particular professional groups or forms of journalistic work, including local journalism entrepreneurship [9] and cross-border investigative journalism [20]. Consequently, few studies have jointly examined occupational resources, broader psychological well-being, professional quality of life, and burnout-related indicators using the same design, particularly across more than one European journalistic context.

A cross-national perspective may help determine whether these associations appear consistently across different professional settings. Spain and Germany provide two European contexts in which recent research has identified the relevant psychosocial dimensions of journalistic work. In Spain, professional routines, workload, and time pressure have been associated with perceived stress among journalists [1], whereas research involving German journalists has emphasised the relevance of organisational and social support for workplace well-being [2]. Broader European research also suggests that journalists may experience shared occupational pressures alongside differences in organisational and institutional support across professional contexts [20]. Therefore, examining journalists in both contexts provides an opportunity to explore whether similar patterns of occupational resources, psychological well-being, and burnout-related strain are observed across the two distinct professional settings. Nevertheless, because the present study used non-probability sampling, the comparison is exploratory and is not intended to represent or establish equivalence among national journalist populations.

Thus, this study contributes to the literature by jointly examining occupational resources, global life satisfaction, happiness, professional quality of life and burnout-related indicators among journalists in Spain and Germany. Rather than focusing exclusively on adverse occupational out-

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comes, this study considers positive occupational and psychological indicators together with burnout-related strain and examines whether these patterns differ according to country and gender.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine workplace well-being, global life satisfaction, happiness, professional quality of life, and burnout-related indicators among journalists in Spain and Germany. Therefore, the present study addresses three questions: (1) What levels of workplace well-being, global life satisfaction, happiness, professional quality of life, and burnout-related indicators are observed in the sample? (2) How are workplace resources and psychological well-being indicators associated with burnout-related variables? and (3) Are there differences according to country and gender? Given the cross-sectional and exploratory design, the analyses aimed to describe associations and group differences rather than establish causal relationships.

Materials and Methods

Study Design

This quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational study was conducted using a non-probability convenience sample. This design enabled the description of occupational and psychological well-being and burnout-related indicators, examination of their bivariate associations, and comparisons according to country and gender.

Participants

The analytical sample comprised 227 professional journalists: 115 participants residing and/or working in Spain, and 112 residing and/or working in Germany. This study included 108 men and 119 women. The participants were recruited through non-probability convenience sampling using professional journalism associations, media organisations, professional networks, and academic contacts. The eligibility criteria were as follows: being an adult professional journalist currently residing and/or working in Spain or Germany, providing informed consent, and completing the questionnaires included in the analysis. The participants were assigned to the Spanish or German sample according to the country in which they were residing and/or working at the time of the survey.

The participants had a mean age of 42.8 years (standard deviation [SD] = 10.6), with ages ranging from 23 to 67 years. The male journalists had a mean age of 44.3 years (SD = 10.8), whereas the female journalists had a mean age of 41.4 years (SD = 10.2). Participants in the Spanish sample had a mean age of 41.7 years (SD = 10.4), compared to 43.9 years (SD = 10.7) in the German sample.

Instruments

The questionnaires were administered in Spanish and German. Existing validated versions were used when available and the wording was linguistically and culturally adapted to the two language contexts and reviewed for semantic equivalence. These adaptations are described as linguistic adaptations and have not been presented as independent psychometric validations. These measures assessed workplace well-being, global life satisfaction, happiness, professional quality of life, and occupational burnout.

Questionnaires with established psychometric validity were used for data collection. Well-being was measured using the instrument developed by Hassani [21], which was linguistically and culturally adapted to Spanish and German contexts. Life satisfaction was assessed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) [22], while happiness was measured using the Lima Happiness Scale (LHS) [23] following prior verification of its factor fit in European samples [24]. Occupational burnout was measured using the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) [25,26], whereas compassion satisfaction, professional quality of life burnout, and secondary traumatic stress were assessed using the Professional Quality of Life (ProQOL) scale [27]. The combination of these instruments allows for the capture of both hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of well-being, as well as indicators of emotional exhaustion, providing a comprehensive approach to the phenomenon under study.

Well-Being at Work

Workplace well-being was assessed using eight single-item indicators adapted from Hassani [21]: clear role responsibilities, resourceful management, achievable objectives, autonomy, results considered, satisfactory working conditions, passion for the job, and happiness in one's current position. Each indicator was rated from 1 to 10. Verbal anchors were adapted to the content of each item; in all cases, higher scores indicated a more favourable evaluation of the corresponding occupational characteristics. The eight indicators were analysed separately, and no overall score was used in the main analyses. The available internal consistency coefficient for the set of indicators was Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.90$.

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SWLS

Global life satisfaction was assessed using the SWLS [22]. The scale comprises five items rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The items were summed to obtain a total score ranging from 5 to 35, with higher scores indicating greater global life satisfaction. In the present study, the total scores ranged from 9 to 21. To distinguish this measure from the life satisfaction dimension of the LHS, this variable has been consistently labelled the "SWLS total score" throughout the manuscript. An example of an item is: "In most respects, my life is just as I would like it to be". The scale has demonstrated good internal consistency and favourable psychometric properties across different samples [22,28]. In this study, the internal consistency was 0.86.

LHS

Happiness was assessed using the LHS [23], comprising 27 items rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument includes four dimensions: positive sense of life, life satisfaction, personal fulfilment, and joie de vivre. Subscale scores were calculated by summing the corresponding items after applying the required reverse scoring, with higher values indicating higher levels of the assessed dimension. Reliability coefficients in the present sample for the four dimensions were $\alpha = 0.80$ for Positive sense of life, $\alpha = 0.93$ for Life satisfaction, $\alpha = 0.78$ for Personal fulfilment and $\alpha = 0.77$ for joie de vivre.

MBI

Occupational burnout was assessed using the MBI [25,26], comprising 22 items rated on a 7-point frequency scale from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). The instrument included emotional exhaustion (nine items; theoretical range: 0–54), depersonalisation (five items; range: 0–30), and personal accomplishment (eight items; range: 0–48). Higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation scores indicated greater occupational strain. Personal accomplishment is scored in the opposite direction; higher scores indicate greater professional accomplishment and, therefore, lower burnout. The three dimensions were analysed as continuous variables and no diagnostic categories were applied. An example of an item is: "I feel emotionally drained by my work". The instrument exhibited high internal consistency with Cronbach's alpha values of 0.91 for emotional exhaustion, 0.79 for depersonalisation, and 0.73 for personal accomplishment in the present sample.

ProQOL Scale

ProQOL was assessed using the 30-item ProQOL Scale [27]. This instrument comprises three 10-item subscales: compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. The items are rated from 1 (never) to 5 (very frequently). After reverse scoring the corresponding items, the items belonging to each subscale were summed. Raw scores ranged from 10 to 50 for each subscale, with higher scores indicating higher levels of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress. The ProQOL Scale reports Cronbach's α coefficients of 0.89 for compassion satisfaction, 0.77 for burnout, and 0.80 for secondary traumatic stress in the present sample. The subscales were analysed as continuous variables, and no diagnostic or categorical interpretation was applied.

An example of an item is "I feel satisfied that I can help others through my work". The instrument demonstrated adequate reliability in the present study, consistent with previous studies that reported Cronbach's α coefficients of approximately 0.88 for compassion satisfaction, 0.75 for burnout, and 0.81 for secondary traumatic stress [27].

Procedure

Data were collected between August and September 2025. The questionnaires were administered to professional journalists residing and/or working in Spain and Germany through an online secure platform. The study was coordinated by researchers from the University of Málaga and University of Granada, Spain. The participants were recruited through professional journalism associations, media organisations, professional networks, and academic contacts in both countries. In Germany, dissemination was principally supported through contacts associated with Hochschule Hannover, Faculty III, and the University of Hildesheim, including the Bühler Campus and Leibniz University Hannover, all located in Lower Saxony, as well as through German journalists' associations and media organisations. In Spain, the questionnaire was disseminated nationwide through journalist associations, media organisations, and professional networks. Because participation occurred online, responses were not collected exclusively from a single physical institution. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before completion of the questionnaire.

This study used a non-probability convenience sampling strategy. Spanish and German group membership

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was determined by the country in which the participants reported residing and/or practising journalism at the time of participation. The analyses were based on 227 complete cases. No imputation procedure was applied and the valid sample size was n = 227 for the descriptive statistics, correlations, and group comparisons reported in the tables.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and applicable data protection regulations [29]. It was carried out within the framework of a broader research project approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Granada (Comité de Ética en Investigación de la Universidad de Granada), under approval number 2694/CEIH/2022, dated 24 May 2022. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and informed consent was obtained from all the participants.

Normality Tests and Type of Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 32.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA). The distribution assumptions were examined through skewness, kurtosis, and visual inspection of the distributions. Because no severe departures from normality were observed, parametric analyses were performed. Descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated. Independent-sample *t*-tests were used to compare participants by country (Spain vs. Germany) and gender (men vs. women). Welch's correction was applied when the homogeneity of the variance assumption was not met.

To reduce the family wise error rate, Holm's sequential adjustment was applied separately to the correlation families and each family of the group comparisons. Cohen's d values and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) were used for group comparisons. Statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

A post hoc multivariable regression model was not fitted because the study was exploratory, no predictor structure was pre-specified, and several occupational resource indicators were substantially intercorrelated. Therefore, the revised analyses prioritised direct country and gender comparisons, multiplicity adjustment, effect sizes, and confidence intervals.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

The journalists reported relatively high mean scores for passion for their job (mean [M] = 8.10, SD = 2.35), clear role responsibility (M = 7.58, SD = 2.44), and autonomy (M = 7.55, SD = 2.30). Lower mean values were observed for satisfactory working conditions (M = 6.49, SD = 2.61) and resource management (M = 6.72, SD = 2.51).

As shown in Table 1, the mean SWLS total score was 15.61 (SD = 2.76). For the LHS dimensions, mean scores were 46.51 (SD = 6.30) for positive sense of life, 22.71 (SD = 4.93) for life satisfaction, 21.76 (SD = 5.29) for personal fulfilment, and 17.12 (SD = 3.25) for joie de vivre. The mean scores were 31.22 (SD = 6.30) for compassion satisfaction, 24.75 (SD = 6.20) for ProQOL burnout, 31.24 (SD = 6.26) for secondary traumatic stress, 20.94 (SD = 13.43) for MBI emotional exhaustion, 8.88 (SD = 6.44) for depersonalisation, and 33.98 (SD = 8.09) for personal accomplishment. These scores were reported descriptively as continuous variables and were not assigned to low, moderate, or high categories.

Correlations

As shown in Table 2, the workplace indicators were positively intercorrelated (r = 0.34 to 0.74), and all these associations remained statistically significant after Holm's adjustment (adjusted $p < 0.001$). Happiness in the current position was positively associated with clear role responsibilities, resourceful management, achievable objectives, autonomy, results considered, satisfactory working conditions, and passion for the job (r = 0.57 to 0.74, adjusted $p < 0.001$). The small bivariate associations previously observed between gender and the two workplace indicators did not remain significant after adjusting for multiple testing.

In the selected composite scales (Table 3), the total SWLS score was positively associated with the LHS dimensions of life satisfaction, personal fulfilment, and joie de vivre (r = 0.51 to 0.87, adjusted $p < 0.001$). ProQOL burnout and MBI emotional exhaustion were negatively associated with the well-being indicators (r = –0.62 to –0.29, adjusted $p < 0.001$). MBI personal accomplishment was positively associated with indicators of well-being and negatively associated with ProQOL burnout and emotional exhaustion. All the correlations shown in Table 3 remained significant after Holm's adjustment.

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Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the study variables in the total sample.

Variable	M	SD	Min	Max
Clear role responsibilities (1–10)	7.58	2.44	1	10
Resourceful management (1–10)	6.72	2.51	1	10
Achievable objectives (1–10)	7.38	2.54	1	10
Autonomy (1–10)	7.55	2.30	1	10
Results considered (1–10)	7.03	2.65	1	10
Satisfactory working conditions (1–10)	6.49	2.61	1	10
Passion for the job (1–10)	8.10	2.35	1	10
Happiness in the current position (1–10)	7.18	2.59	1	10
SWLS total score	15.61	2.76	9	21
LHS—Positive sense of life	46.51	6.30	20	52
LHS—Life satisfaction	22.71	4.93	6	29
LHS—Personal fulfilment	21.76	5.29	7	30
LHS—Joie de vivre	17.12	3.25	4	20
ProQOL—Secondary traumatic stress	31.24	6.26	16	42
ProQOL—Compassion satisfaction	31.22	6.30	16	42
ProQOL—Burnout	24.75	6.20	11	36
MBI—Emotional exhaustion	20.94	13.43	0	44
MBI—Depersonalisation	8.88	6.44	0	26
MBI—Personal accomplishment	33.98	8.09	17	48

Total sample: n = 227. Spain: n = 115; Germany: n = 112. M, mean; SD, standard deviation; Min, minimum observed value; Max, maximum observed value; SWLS, Satisfaction with Life Scale; LHS, Lima Happiness Scale; ProQOL, Professional Quality of Life; MBI, Maslach Burnout Inventory. ProQOL scale and MBI scores are treated as continuous variables.

Table 2. Pearson's correlation matrix for workplace resources and well-being indicators.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Clear role responsibilities	—								
2. Resourceful management	0.54***	—							
3. Achievable objectives	0.58***	0.63***	—						
4. Autonomy	0.59***	0.42***	0.34***	—					
5. Results considered	0.42***	0.57***	0.62***	0.38***	—				
6. Satisfactory working conditions	0.51***	0.64***	0.66***	0.41***	0.52***	—			
7. Passion for the job	0.45***	0.39***	0.41***	0.41***	0.50***	0.36***	—		
8. Happiness in current position	0.66***	0.65***	0.67***	0.61***	0.57***	0.70***	0.74***	—	
9. Gender	–0.11	–0.02	–0.16	–0.13	–0.05	–0.16	–0.04	0.01	—

Total sample: n = 227. Gender was coded as 1 = male, and 2 = female. Holm's sequential procedure was applied to the 36 correlations listed in this table. ***Holm-adjusted $p < 0.001$. No correlations involving gender remained statistically significant after adjustment.

Country Comparisons

Independent-sample *t*-tests showed no statistically significant differences between journalists from Spain and Germany for any workplace well-being indicators or composite scales. For the workplace indicators, all comparisons were non-significant (raw $p = 0.282–0.979$; $|d| = 0.003–0.143$) and remained non-significant after Holm's adjustment. Similarly, no country differences were observed in the total SWLS score, LHS dimensions, ProQOL subscales, or MBI dimensions (raw $p = 0.487–0.999$; $|d| = 0.000–0.092$). The ProQOL Scale burnout scores were virtually identical in Spain (M = 24.74, SD = 6.35) and Germany (M = 24.71, SD = 6.16), $t(225) = 0.04$, $p = 0.971$, d = 0.01. The same pattern was observed for MBI emotional exhaustion, Spain: M = 20.88, SD = 12.94; Germany: M = 20.93, SD = 14.11; $t(225) = –0.03$, $p = 0.976$, d = 0.00, and compassion satisfaction, Spain: M = 31.22, SD = 6.68; Germany: M = 31.21, SD = 5.92; $t(225) = 0.01$, $p = 0.990$, d = 0.00. These findings indicate no detectable overall country differences

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Table 3. Pearson's correlation matrix for selected composite scales.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SWLS total score	—						
2. LHS—Life satisfaction	0.87***	—					
3. LHS—Personal fulfilment	0.79***	0.85***	—				
4. LHS—Joie de vivre	0.51***	0.73***	0.62***	—			
5. ProQOL—Burnout	–0.29***	–0.35***	–0.39***	–0.34***	—		
6. MBI—Emotional exhaustion	–0.53***	–0.55***	–0.62***	–0.39***	0.67***	—	
7. MBI—Personal accomplishment	0.55***	0.60***	0.62***	0.56***	–0.40***	–0.65***	—

Total sample: n = 227. Holm's sequential procedure was applied to the 21 correlations. ***Holm-adjusted $p < 0.001$. SWLS, Satisfaction with Life Scale; LHS, Lima Happiness Scale; ProQOL, Professional Quality of Life; MBI, Maslach Burnout Inventory. The table presents selected composite scales; descriptive statistics for all ProQOL and MBI dimensions are reported in Table 1.

Table 4. Comparison by gender of workplace resources and well-being indicators.

Variable	Men M (SD)	Women M (SD)	*t*	df	Raw *p*	pHolm	d [95% CI]
Clear role responsibilities	7.87 (2.04)	7.34 (2.71)	1.67	217.7	0.096	0.479	0.22 [–0.04, 0.48]
Resourceful management	6.77 (2.55)	6.68 (2.51)	0.27	225	0.789	1.000	0.04 [–0.23, 0.30]
Achievable objectives	7.83 (1.74)	7.02 (2.99)	2.52	192.9	0.013	0.101	0.33 [0.07, 0.59]
Autonomy	7.87 (2.09)	7.29 (2.44)	1.93	224.3	0.055	0.331	0.25 [–0.01, 0.52]
Results considered	7.17 (2.52)	6.92 (2.76)	0.71	225	0.479	1.000	0.09 [–0.17, 0.36]
Satisfactory working conditions	6.96 (2.27)	6.12 (2.82)	2.48	221.9	0.014	0.101	0.33 [0.06, 0.59]
Passion for the job	8.21 (1.71)	8.02 (2.76)	0.63	199.6	0.530	1.000	0.08 [–0.18, 0.34]
Happiness in current position	7.15 (2.24)	7.20 (2.85)	–0.15	220.6	0.883	1.000	–0.02 [–0.28, 0.24]

Men: n = 108; women: n = 119. M, mean; SD, standard deviation; *t*, *t* statistic; df, degrees of freedom; pHolm, Holm-adjusted *p*-value; d, Cohen's d; CI, confidence interval. Welch's *t*-tests and fractional degrees of freedom were reported when the homogeneity of variance assumption was not met. Raw *p*-values were unadjusted, and Holm's adjustment was applied within this family of eight comparisons. Cohen's d was calculated as men minus women with negative values indicating higher scores. No comparison remained significant after the Holm's adjustment.

in the measured outcomes. However, they should not be interpreted as evidence of equivalence or proof that gender patterns were identical across countries.

Gender Differences

After Holm's adjustment, none of the gender differences in the eight workplace well-being indicators remained statistically significant (Table 4).

The largest unadjusted differences were observed for achievable objectives and satisfactory working conditions; however, both were small in magnitude (d = 0.33) and their Holm-adjusted *p*-values were 0.101.

For the psychological and burnout-related scales (Table 5), women reported higher compassion satisfaction (M = 33.30, SD = 5.50) than men (M = 28.92, SD = 6.36), $t(225) = –5.56$, Holm-adjusted $p < 0.001$, d = –0.74, 95% CI [–1.01, –0.47]. Women also reported higher ProQOL burnout (M = 26.59, SD = 5.86 vs. M = 22.67, SD = 6.02), $t(225) = –4.97$, adjusted $p < 0.001$, d = –0.66, 95% CI [–0.93, –0.39], and higher MBI emotional exhaustion (M = 24.52, SD = 13.84 vs. M = 16.92, SD = 11.97), Welch's $t(224.5) = –4.44$, adjusted $p < 0.001$, d = –0.59, 95% CI [–0.85, –0.32]. No other gender comparisons remained statistically significant after Holm's adjustment. The three retained effects are moderate in magnitude.

Discussion

The findings of this study describe the coexistence of favourable occupational and psychological indicators of burnout-related strains. From a JD-R perspective, this pattern can be interpreted in terms of the simultaneous operation of occupational demands and resources: persistent demands may contribute to strain, whereas resources may support more favourable occupational experiences without necessarily operating as direct protective mechanisms [10]. This interpretation is consistent with previous research describing journalism as a professional context in which meaningful and rewarding work may coexist with substantial personal and occupational demands [9]. More recent

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Table 5. Comparison by gender on psychological well-being and burnout-related scales.

Variable	Men M (SD)	Women M (SD)	*t*	df	Raw *p*	pHolm	d [95% CI]
SWLS total score	15.92 (2.78)	15.33 (2.76)	1.61	225	0.110	0.769	0.21 [–0.05, 0.48]
LHS—Positive sense of life	46.80 (6.00)	46.25 (6.55)	0.66	225	0.512	1.000	0.09 [–0.17, 0.35]
LHS—Life satisfaction	22.96 (5.13)	22.48 (4.84)	0.73	225	0.469	1.000	0.10 [–0.16, 0.36]
LHS—Personal fulfilment	22.25 (5.60)	21.33 (5.07)	1.30	225	0.195	1.000	0.17 [–0.09, 0.43]
LHS—Joie de vivre	17.71 (2.56)	16.59 (3.73)	2.66	209.9	0.008	0.068	0.35 [0.09, 0.61]
ProQOL—Compassion satisfaction	28.92 (6.36)	33.30 (5.50)	–5.56	225	<0.001	<0.001	–0.74 [–1.01, –0.47]
ProQOL—Burnout	22.67 (6.02)	26.59 (5.86)	–4.97	225	<0.001	<0.001	–0.66 [–0.93, –0.39]
ProQOL—Secondary traumatic stress	30.70 (6.10)	31.73 (6.36)	–1.24	225	0.215	1.000	–0.17 [–0.43, 0.10]
MBI—Emotional exhaustion	16.92 (11.97)	24.52 (13.84)	–4.44	224.5	<0.001	<0.001	–0.59 [–0.85, –0.32]
MBI—Depersonalisation	8.25 (5.98)	9.44 (6.89)	–1.38	225	0.168	1.000	–0.18 [–0.45, 0.08]
MBI—Personal accomplishment	34.46 (8.30)	33.56 (8.04)	0.83	225	0.408	1.000	0.11 [–0.15, 0.37]

Men: n = 108; women: n = 119. M, mean; SD, standard deviation; *t*, *t* statistic; df, degrees of freedom; pHolm, Holm-adjusted *p*-value; d, Cohen's d; CI, confidence interval; SWLS, Satisfaction with Life Scale; LHS, Lima Happiness Scale; ProQOL, Professional Quality of Life; MBI, Maslach Burnout Inventory. Welch's *t* is reported for LHS—Joie de vivre and MBI—emotional exhaustion. Raw *p*-values were unadjusted, and Holm's adjustment was applied within this family of 11 comparisons. Cohen's d was calculated as men minus women with negative values indicating higher scores among women. After adjustment, only compassion satisfaction, ProQOL burnout, and MBI emotional exhaustion remained statistically significant.

systematic evidence conceptualises journalistic burnout as arising from an imbalance between increasing professional demands and insufficient or declining resources, rather than solely as an individual response to stress [5]. This perspective is relevant to the present findings because favourable evaluations of autonomy, role clarity, or other aspects of work do not indicate that occupational demands are adequately contained. As the study was cross-sectional, these associations cannot establish whether workplace resources reduce burnout or improve well-being.

The correlations among role clarity, management resources, achievable objectives, autonomy, working conditions, and happiness in the current position suggest that organisational conditions are meaningfully related to journalists' evaluations of their work. This pattern is consistent with recent journalist-specific evidence emphasising the relevance of social and organisational support in managing emotionally demanding work. Research on journalists in Germany and the United Kingdom has highlighted the role of personal, social, and organisational support systems in workplace well-being [2], while evidence from Norwegian journalists exposed to traumatic coverage has shown that workplace social support is associated with lower subsequent stress reactions and higher current well-being [11]. This pattern is also consistent with evidence from a nationally representative survey of US reporters showing that trust in management and a supportive workplace culture were particularly relevant to job satisfaction, whereas work–life balance and interpersonal support were more closely associated with broader well-being [19]. Similarly, perceived organisational support was associated with lower stress and greater work commitment among journalists during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic [30]. Taken together, this evidence suggests that organisational resources form part of the psychosocial conditions through which journalists experience and evaluate their work rather than merely functioning as background characteristics.

The present findings should not be interpreted to indicate that every occupational resource operates uniformly as a protective factor. Research explicitly applying the JD-R model to journalists found that perceived organisational support was negatively associated with burnout, whereas greater job autonomy was unexpectedly associated with higher burnout among Chinese journalists, suggesting that autonomy could also be experienced as increased responsibility and occupational risk [12]. Although this professional and cultural context differs from that of the present European sample, the findings qualify as a simple, additive interpretation of resources. The effects of a particular resource may depend on how it is organised and the demands with which it occurs. Accordingly, the positive associations observed between autonomy and favourable work evaluations should not be interpreted as evidence that autonomy protects journalists from exhaustion under all working conditions.

Similarly, the negative associations of ProQOL burnout and emotional exhaustion with global life satisfaction and the dimensions of happiness were consistent with the expected conceptual distinction between occupational strain and positive well-being. Taken together, these concurrent associations are compatible with the JD-R frame-

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work in which occupational demands and resources represent distinct but interacting aspects of the occupational experience [10]. The convergence of burnout-related measures with broader indicators of life satisfaction and happiness suggests that occupational strain may be accompanied by less favourable evaluations that extend beyond the immediate work setting. However, the MBI dimensions, ProQOL burnout, and positive well-being measures should not be treated as interchangeable because they capture related but conceptually distinct aspects of occupational and psychological functioning. This distinction is particularly relevant given the methodological heterogeneity identified in systematic reviews of journalist burnout, including differences in measurement approaches, scale versions, cut-off points, and dimensions assessed across studies [5,31]. These results should be interpreted as concurrent rather than directional.

No statistically significant differences were identified between the Spanish and German samples and the corresponding effect sizes were negligible or small. Therefore, in the present sample, the measured indicators show broadly similar aggregate patterns across the two professional contexts. However, this finding should not be interpreted as an indication that national or organisational contexts are irrelevant. Nevertheless, recent evidence suggests that occupational experiences among European journalists are associated with specific working and organisational conditions. In Spain, perceived stress has been associated with professional routines and workload, including working hours and time pressure [1], while research involving German journalists has highlighted the relevance of organisational and social support for workplace well-being [2]. Qualitative evidence from European cross-border investigative journalists further indicates that some occupational pressures may be shared across national settings, while legal constraints, institutional support, and protection remain context dependent [20]. Research comparing journalists in Spain and Mexico similarly suggests that mental health difficulties need to be interpreted in relation to broader employment conditions, job insecurity, and organisational practices rather than exposure to critical events alone [18]. Thus, similar mean levels between the Spanish and German groups may coexist with different configurations of demand and resources that were not captured by the variables included in the present study. However, the non-significant differences did not demonstrate equivalence, and no country-by-gender interactions or country-adjusted multivariate models were tested. Therefore, the results do not indicate that the same gender pattern occurs in each country.

After correction for multiple testing, robust gender differences were limited to compassion satisfaction, ProQOL burnout, and emotional exhaustion, with women reporting higher scores for all three variables and moderate effect sizes. Previous journalist-specific research has shown a convergence regarding greater occupational strain among women. Reinardy [32], for example, reported higher exhaustion among female journalists, while Hoak [30] identified higher stress among women during pandemic coverage. Recent European research has provided contextual elements for interpreting this pattern. In Spain, gender is significantly related to perceived stress among journalists, although professional routines and workloads show greater explanatory relevance [1]. Qualitative research with Portuguese journalists has also documented gendered experiences of working conditions, including long working hours and work–home conflict, with some burdens described as being particularly consequential for women [33]. Taken together, these findings suggest that the gender differences observed in the present study need to be understood in relation to occupational and work–life conditions, rather than gender alone. However, work–home conflict, caregiving demands, occupational roles, and differential exposure to emotionally demanding assignments were not measured. Accordingly, the observed gender pattern should be interpreted as an empirical difference that requires further investigation rather than as evidence of a specific gender-related mechanism. Future studies should directly examine these factors and determine whether gender differences remain after accounting for occupational roles, workloads, employment conditions, and work–life demands.

Overall, the findings support an interpretation of journalists' occupational health centred on the interaction between working demands, organisational resources, and broader indicators of psychological well-being. From a JD-R perspective, the results are compatible with the differentiated but interacting processes of occupational strain and resources, whereas recent journalist-specific evidence indicates that the role of particular resources may vary according to organisational and cultural contexts [12]. This interpretation also draws attention away from explanations centred exclusively on individual coping or resilience. Recent evidence increasingly identifies workload, organisational support, workplace culture, and broader employment conditions as relevant levels of analysis for understanding journalists' burnout and well-being [5,18,19]. Therefore, these findings support further longitudinal and intervention research examining how organisational conditions contribute to journalists' occupational health, while the present cross-sectional design does not permit conclusions regarding causal effects or intervention effectiveness.

This study has some limitations. First, its cross-

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sectional design did not permit causal or temporal conclusions. Second, non-probability convenience sampling limits representativeness and prevents generalisation to all journalists in Spain and Germany. Third, all measures were self-reported, and may have been affected by common method and response biases. Fourth, although Holm's procedure was used to reduce the family wise error rate, this study included multiple exploratory associations and group comparisons. Fifth, no pre-specified multivariable model was available to estimate the independent contribution of occupational resources after adjusting for sociodemographic covariates, and no country-by-gender interaction was tested. Although direct comparisons between Spanish and German samples were conducted, these comparisons were exploratory and should not be interpreted as representative national comparisons or evidence of equivalence between the two professional contexts. Finally, some questionnaire wording required linguistic and cultural adaptation, which was not psychometrically validated in the present samples. Future research should use representative or stratified samples and longitudinal designs and examine country-specific and gender-related patterns using prespecified adjusted models.

Conclusions

In this non-probability sample of journalists from Spain and Germany, positive occupational resources and psychological well-being indicators coexist with burnout-related strain. No statistically significant differences were detected between the two country samples; however, these findings should not be interpreted as evidence of equivalence between the Spanish and German professional contexts. After adjusting for multiple testing, women reported higher compassion satisfaction, ProQOL burnout, and emotional exhaustion than men.

The findings describe associations and group differences, and should not be interpreted as evidence that particular workplace conditions cause or prevent burnout. Nevertheless, they identified organisational resources, professional quality of life, and emotional exhaustion as relevant areas for further longitudinal and country-adjusted research. Workplace support and emotional health initiatives may have practical implications for future intervention studies rather than as effects demonstrated by the present research.

Availability of Data and Materials

The data presented in this study are available on reasonable request from the corresponding authors, subject to ethical and data protection restrictions.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, methodology, validation, formal analysis, investigation, writing—review and editing, funding acquisition: AMMR and FMMR; software, data curation, writing—original draft preparation, visualization: AMMR; resources, supervision, project administration: FMMR. Both authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript. Both authors agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and the applicable data protection regulations. It was carried out within the framework of a broader research project approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Granada (Comité de Ética en Investigación de la Universidad de Granada), under approval number 2694/CEIH/2022, dated 24 May 2022. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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