



MESTRADO EM GESTÃO DO POTENCIAL HUMANO

**Unraveling the link between flourishing and talent retention:
workplace well-being and engagement as serial
mediation mechanisms**

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Lisboa

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Resumo

O *flourishing* revela-se um fator determinante no comportamento dos colaboradores em contexto organizacional, contribuindo de forma significativa para a retenção de talentos. Paralelamente, o bem-estar no local de trabalho e o *engagement* assumem um papel essencial no reforço desta relação. O presente estudo teve como objetivo analisar a mediação sequencial do bem-estar laboral e do *engagement* na relação entre o *flourishing* e a retenção de talentos. A amostra foi composta por 401 colaboradores, por conta de outrem, com idades entre os 21 e os 65 anos. Através de um desenho transversal e a uma abordagem quantitativa foram testadas as hipóteses formuladas e exploradas as interações entre os constructos em análise. A recolha de dados foi realizada através da aplicação da *Flourishing Scale*, do *Short Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale* (Short-SWELL), da *Utrecht Work Engagement Scale* (UWES-3) e do *Employee Retention Questionnaire*, com recurso a uma amostragem por conveniência. Os resultados evidenciaram que o *flourishing* exerce um efeito positivo e significativo sobre a retenção de talentos, sendo este efeito parcialmente mediado pelo bem-estar no trabalho. Verificou-se, ainda, que o bem-estar influencia positivamente o *engagement* e a retenção de talentos. A análise estatística confirmou a existência de um efeito de mediação sequencial, indicando que o *flourishing* potencia a retenção de talentos através do incremento do bem-estar e do *engagement*. Estes resultados sugerem que níveis elevados de *flourishing* promovem maior bem-estar, que por sua vez, fortalecem o envolvimento dos colaboradores com as suas tarefas e com a organização, o que aumenta a sua intenção de permanência. Adicionalmente, observou-se que os participantes pertencentes à geração *Baby Boomer*, os que desempenham funções de liderança e os que possuem dez ou mais anos de antiguidade na organização revelam uma intenção mais acentuada de permanecer na mesma.

Keywords: *flourishing*, bem-estar em contexto laboral, *engagement*, retenção de talentos, mediação em série.

Abstract

Flourishing significantly influences employee behavior in the workplace, contributing positively to talent retention. Furthermore, enhancing employee well-being and engagement is critical to strengthening this relationship. This study examines the roles of workplace well-being and engagement as sequential mediators in the association between flourishing and talent retention. The sample consisted of 401 salaried employees aged 21 to 65 years. Employing a cross-sectional design and a quantitative methodology, the study tested the proposed hypotheses and analyzed the relations among these variables. Data were collected using the Flourishing Scale, the Short Smith Wellbeing Questionnaire (Short-SWELL), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-3), and the Employee Retention Questionnaire, applying a convenience sampling approach. Results indicated that flourishing significantly influences talent retention, with workplace well-being acting as a mediator in this relationship. Furthermore, the study demonstrated that workplace well-being positively impacts both engagement and talent retention. The analysis further revealed a sequential mediation effect, whereby flourishing positively affected talent retention through workplace well-being and engagement. These findings suggest that flourishing enhances employee well-being levels, which subsequently elevates engagement with tasks and the organization, ultimately increasing employees' intention to remain within the organization. It was also found that participants belonging to the Baby Boomer generation, those in leadership roles, and those with a tenure of ten years or more exhibit a stronger intention to remain within the organization.

Keywords: flourishing, workplace well-being, engagement, talent retention, serial mediation.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

AMOS	-	Analysis of Moment Structures
AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted
B	-	Unstandardized beta
CFA	-	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CFI	-	Comparative Fit Index
CI	-	Confidence intervals
CR	-	Composite Reliability
HI90	-	Higher bound at 90%
HR	-	Human Resources
LO90	-	Lower bound at 90%
M	-	Mean
Max	-	Maximum
Min	-	Minimum
MSV	-	Maximum Shared Variance
p	-	p-value
RMSEA	-	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation
SD	-	Standard-deviation
SE	-	Standard error
SRMR	-	Standardized Root Mean Square Residual
TLI	-	Tucker-Lewis Index
χ^2/df	-	Chi-Square/ Degrees of freedom

Introduction

In the current work context, talent retention has emerged as one of the main challenges faced by Human Resources (HR) professionals, as it directly influences the sustainability and performance of organisations (Biason, 2020). In this scenario, Murthy (2022) highlights that creating work environments that promote the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of employees plays a vital role in fostering their personal and professional development. Furthermore, it encourages engagement, defined as the degree of commitment employees demonstrate while performing their daily tasks (Mazzetti et al., 2023). It is therefore essential to adopt strategic approaches that enhance and sustain well-being in the workplace, ensuring long-term positive outcomes (Kraus et al., 2023).

Implementing strategies that promote well-being is crucial to increasing job satisfaction (Batista et al., 2022). Within this context, the concept of flourishing gains particular relevance, as it is associated with individuals' subjective perception of quality of life, encompassing dimensions such as health, interpersonal relationships, and emotional well-being (Sirgy & Lee, 2018). Redelinguys and Rothmann (2020) further explain that flourishing can be understood as the employee's evaluation of their own workplace well-being and how the organisation shapes their professional experience. This phenomenon arises when individuals report high levels of life satisfaction, engage in challenging activities, and experience positive emotions that fuel their motivation at work (Ferreira & Potgieter, 2021). A work environment that supports well-being enhances employee effectiveness and has a positive impact on organisational performance over the long term (Stankevičienė et al., 2021). Consequently, promoting employee well-being not only improves individual performance but also contributes significantly to business competitiveness and sustainability, becoming a key differentiating factor in strategic HR management (Gelencsér et al., 2023).

Despite the growing body of research exploring flourishing, engagement, and well-being as isolated predictors of workplace outcomes, there is a significant gap in understanding how these constructs interact in an integrated and dynamic way (Redelinguys & Rothmann, 2020; Malheiros et al., 2023). In particular, studies that test sequential mediation mechanisms — where flourishing leads to higher well-being, which then enhances engagement and ultimately results in greater talent retention — remain scarce (Desiana et al., 2024; Ho & Chan, 2022). This study addresses that gap by proposing and empirically testing a serial mediation model, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of how flourishing operates as a foundation for sustainable talent retention strategies in organisational settings.

Organisational effectiveness is also linked to the concept of engagement, which may be analysed from two perspectives: (a) the individual level, referring to the simultaneous investment of physical, cognitive, and emotional energy in work tasks; and (b) the organisational level, defined as a positive and fulfilling psychological state characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption in professional activities (Saks, 2021). Given its influence on employee involvement and motivation, engagement plays a crucial role in talent retention, as more engaged workers are more likely to remain within the organisation over time (Kaushal & Vashisht, 2022).

Talent retention has gained increasing prominence in the corporate context and is understood as the set of strategies adopted to ensure employees remain within the organisation (Nzewi & Audu, 2023). Several studies (e.g., Kurdi et al., 2020; Lu et al., 2023; Škerháková et al., 2022) indicate that retention practices have a significant impact not only on organisations but also on the broader economy and society. The loss of qualified professionals represents a considerable cost for organisations, not only due to the immediate disruption to operations but also because of the investment required to attract and integrate new talent (Klein et al., 2020). Accordingly, the implementation of effective strategies to retain qualified professionals becomes a strategic imperative that contributes to organisational stability and competitiveness (Iqbal et al., 2022). The main goal of such strategies is to create an attractive working environment that encourages employees to remain in the organisation for as long as possible, or at least until the completion of the projects in which they are involved (Biason, 2020).

This research focused on this issue and aimed to examine the mediating role of well-being and engagement in the relationship between flourishing and talent retention in the workplace.

1.Literature review

1.1. Relationship between flourishing and talent retention

Talent retention has increasingly become a strategic priority for organisations, as the departure of qualified professionals not only entails costs associated with recruitment and training but may also compromise business continuity and competitiveness (Biason, 2020). Accordingly, it is essential to understand the factors that contribute to employee satisfaction and well-being, given their critical role in sustaining motivation and organisational tenure (Zhou & Chen, 2021). In this context, flourishing gains particular relevance as a central construct of positive psychology. The concept emerged in the late 1990s through the work of Seligman (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), and was further developed by Diener et al. (2010) to explore the factors that promote happiness and quality of life (Bakracheva, 2020). Within the

work setting, flourishing occurs when employees find purpose in their tasks, experience positive emotions, and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships (Willen et al., 2022). The promotion of flourishing can be understood through two complementary approaches: (a) the hedonic, which emphasises the predominance of positive emotions; and (b) the eudaimonic, which highlights personal fulfilment and human potential development (Huta, 2020). When employees are given opportunities to develop skills and acquire knowledge, organisations benefit from more qualified and committed professionals who are less likely to leave their roles (Zhou & Chen, 2021).

Talent retention is directly linked to the degree of employee engagement and identification with the organisation. When professionals perceive that their well-being is valued, they tend to demonstrate greater loyalty and commitment in carrying out their responsibilities (Manhal, 2024). Therefore, fostering flourishing represents an effective strategy to reduce turnover and enhance workforce stability (Naim & Ozyilmaz, 2022). Organisations that offer continuous learning opportunities, autonomy, and a healthy work-life balance tend to promote a stronger sense of fulfilment among their employees (Porgoli et al., 2021). Well-being in the workplace increases organisational attachment and decreases the likelihood of individuals seeking new professional opportunities (Ferreira & Potgieter, 2021). Following this line of reasoning, Manuti (2022) argues that when employees feel recognised and appreciated, they are more likely to exhibit dedication and loyalty to the organisation. Conversely, toxic work environments or authoritarian leadership styles can result in dissatisfaction and higher turnover rates (Iqbal et al., 2022).

The study by Škerháková et al. (2022) shows that organisations that foster respect and cooperation create a sense of belonging that encourages long-term employee retention. Building a positive organisational culture improves the internal climate and strengthens the company's reputation in the market, making it more attractive to new talent (Kirchner & Stull, 2021). Therefore, well-being is a decisive factor in creating a healthy and motivating work environment (Baek & Kim, 2021).

Promoting flourishing enhances employees' quality of life (Bakracheva, 2020). For this reason, it is imperative to implement strategies that foster well-being, professional development, and a positive organisational environment, thereby supporting talent retention and promoting long-term organisational growth (Amarakoon & Colley, 2022).

In light of the information presented, the first research hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 1: *Flourishing positively influences talent retention.*

1.2. The mediation role of workplace well-being between flourishing and engagement

The concept of flourishing was introduced by Keyes (2002) to describe a state of well-being in which individuals exhibit positive psychological functioning, characterised by the development of their capabilities, self-actualisation, and the pursuit of a meaningful and satisfying life (Junça-Silva & Caetano, 2013). Later, scholars such as Diener et al. (2010) and Seligman (2011) contributed to the conceptual deepening and expansion of the construct, incorporating—or, in some cases, distinguishing—dimensions such as engagement, subjective well-being, positive emotions, life satisfaction, and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Bakracheva, 2020). Despite the various conceptual perspectives, there is a general consensus on the relevance of flourishing as a significant predictor of well-being (Redelinguys & Rothmann, 2020). Recent studies (e.g., Al Aina & Atan, 2020; Lebares et al., 2021; VanderWeele, 2020) have reinforced this association, demonstrating that flourishing is positively correlated with resilience and with the reduction of negative emotional states, thereby contributing to higher levels of psychological, emotional, and social well-being (Ho & Chan, 2022). This makes flourishing particularly relevant in the workplace context (Shir & Ryff, 2022), as it is linked to better mental health outcomes, reduced stress levels, and the prevention of burnout (Murthy, 2022).

In line with this perspective, Rothmann et al. (2019) and VanderWeele (2020) show that flourishing is associated with higher job performance and greater task involvement, thus indicating a direct connection with engagement. When employees experience positive emotions and perceive a sense of purpose in their activities, they are more likely to invest energy, dedication, and enthusiasm in their tasks (Fave, 2020).

Within organisational settings, flourishing has been identified as a strong predictor of employee engagement, as it fosters both personal and professional fulfilment (Zheng et al., 2018). This process is supported by individuals' efforts toward growth and achievement, as well as by the external conditions provided by the organisational environment. When organisations recognise and promote employee development, they reinforce well-being and engagement, even though the impact of flourishing does not always occur directly (Ceribeli & Silva, 2020). Imran et al. (2020) suggest that workplace well-being may function as a mediating mechanism that transforms the state of flourishing into a more active and enduring form of engagement. Workplace well-being is defined as a positive psychological state resulting from the perception that employees' emotional and motivational needs are being met (Ryan et al., 2019). This mediation becomes particularly effective when the organisational context is perceived as

psychologically safe, stimulating, and appreciative of individual value. In such cases, flourishing manifests itself through increased vigour, dedication, and absorption—three core dimensions of engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Schaufeli et al., 2019). Understanding this mediating process is strategically important for defining management practices aimed at promoting well-being, retaining talent, and strengthening organisational effectiveness (Redelinguys & Rothmann, 2020).

Considering the cited studies, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 2: *Flourishing positively predicts well-being (H2a) and engagement (H2b).*

1.3. Relationship between well-being, engagement, and talent retention

The importance of employee well-being in the workplace has grown substantially and is now regarded as a key factor in achieving high levels of engagement throughout one's professional career (Gomez & Chavez, 2023). Studies conducted by Gallup (2019), PwC (2019), and Towers Watson (2020) have shown that well-being contributes to increased employee commitment and, consequently, higher engagement levels, which in turn lead to improved individual productivity and overall organisational performance (Riekhoff & Järnefelt, 2022).

According to Gelencsér et al. (2023), employee satisfaction, the nature of the work, remuneration, internal communication, leadership, and employee benefits are strong predictors of both engagement and the intention to remain in the organisation. These findings support the notion that perceived fairness and appreciation in the workplace significantly influence the strength of the employee–organisation relationship (Gomes & Marques, 2022). Based on this, it is possible to distinguish between two employee profiles. On the one hand, there are those who are deeply engaged and aligned with the organisation's strategy, frequently going beyond their formal job responsibilities. On the other, some show a lower degree of commitment and merely perform the tasks required of them (Jeswani & Sarkar, 2008; Pratama et al., 2022).

Social exchange theory posits that the promotion of favourable working conditions elicits a positive response from employees, leading to increased productivity and greater satisfaction across various life domains—social, family, and professional (Melkamu, 2023). First proposed by Gouldner (1960; Ahmad et al., 2022), this theory suggests that individuals feel a moral obligation to reciprocate the benefits they receive, which is reflected in their dedication and loyalty to the organisation. This reciprocal relationship strengthens organisational citizenship behaviours and reduces turnover intentions (Dai et al., 2022). Therefore, organisations must implement strategies that ensure employee well-being. Among the most relevant are

organisational justice, equitable task distribution, and merit-based recognition, all of which are essential for talent retention (Narayanan et al., 2018). Organisational contexts characterised by positive and healthy relationships tend to increase levels of engagement and well-being, enhancing employees' sense of belonging and their intention to stay with the organisation (Liu et al., 2025; Obeng & Atan, 2024).

The literature review offered insights that allowed us to formulate the third research hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: *Well-being (H3a) and engagement (H3b) positively predict talent retention.*

1.4. Sequential mediation model

Workplace flourishing constitutes a key element in promoting employee well-being, which in turn enhances engagement and, consequently, facilitates talent retention within organisations (Ceribeli & Silva, 2020). When employees experience high levels of flourishing, they tend to feel more fulfilled, motivated, and emotionally balanced, which is reflected in their increased involvement in work-related activities (Imran et al., 2020).

Engagement thus emerges as a direct consequence of flourishing. Employees who perceive that the organisation values their well-being and invests in their personal and professional growth tend to demonstrate higher levels of commitment, dedication, and identification with organisational goals (VanderWeele, 2020). This connection strengthens the bond between employees and the organisation, fostering loyalty and reducing turnover intentions (Redelinghuys & Rothmann, 2020). However, when this bond is not supported by organisational conditions that promote well-being and development, negative consequences may arise for both individuals and organisations. The absence of well-being may lead to physical and psychological exhaustion (Murthy, 2022). In such scenarios, engagement acts as a protective factor by promoting positive attitudes toward work, higher productivity, and improved mental health, all of which contribute to talent retention (Ashraf & Siddiqui, 2020). The intention to leave an organisation often stems from perceptions of professional stagnation, lack of development opportunities, and routine tasks. These factors can be mitigated through the implementation of practices that foster flourishing (Malheiros et al., 2023).

According to Amarakoon and Colley (2022), talent retention is influenced by multiple variables, most notably engagement and well-being. Well-being promotes positive attitudes and behaviours, while engagement strengthens the emotional and professional bond with the organisation (Redelinghuys & Rothmann, 2020). By fostering employee development,

flourishing acts as a catalyst that positively impacts both physical and mental health, inside and outside the workplace (VanderWeele, 2020).

Engagement, well-being, and flourishing are thus fundamental constructs for talent retention. The balance created by these variables significantly contributes to employees' overall satisfaction, reinforcing the need to invest in management practices that promote human development, occupational health, and a sustainable organisational culture (Malheiros et al., 2023).

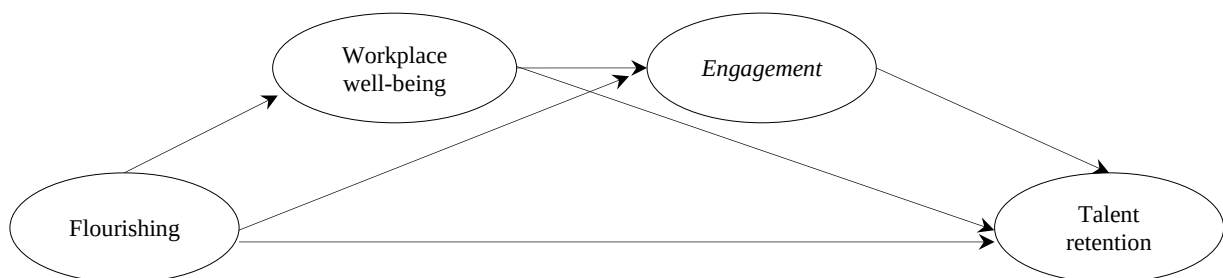
Considering the aforementioned studies, the fourth research hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 4: *Well-being and engagement operate as serial mediators between flourishing and talent retention.*

Figure 1 presents the relationship between the variables and the corresponding research hypotheses.

Figure 1

Proposed conceptual model: the relationship between flourishing and talent retention, with workplace well-being and engagement as serial mediators



Source: Authors' own work

2. Method

This cross-sectional study adopted a quantitative approach with the aim of analysing the relationships between the variables and testing the proposed hypotheses. Data were collected through a questionnaire, administered to a convenience sample. In addition, the snowball sampling technique was employed, whereby participants were invited to share the questionnaire with their contacts. This method enabled the inclusion of individuals who might otherwise not have participated in the study.

2.1. Sample

A total of 401 employed professionals participated in the study, of whom 57.9% were female (Table 1). Participants' ages ranged from 21 to 65 years ($M = 38.18$; $SD = 11.32$).

Table 1

Sociodemographic and professional profile of the sample (N = 401)

Sociodemographic and professional variables	N = 401
Gender (as indicated on official identification)	
Male	169 (42.1%)
Female	232 (57.9%)
Age group (M = 38.18; SD = 11.32)	
30 years old or younger	133 (33.2%)
Between 31 and 40 years old	135 (33.7%)
41 years old or older	133 (33.2%)
Generation	
Baby Boomer Generation	32 (8.0%)
Generation X	80 (20.0%)
Generation Y (Millennials)	237 (59.1%)
Generation Z	52 (13.0%)
Educational qualifications	
Below bachelor's degree	117 (29.2%)
Bachelor's degree	137 (34.2%)
Above bachelor's degree	147 (36.7%)
Job Role	
Operational	121 (30.2%)
Administrative	72 (18.0%)
Technical	122 (30.4%)
Managerial	86 (21.4%)
Organisational tenure (M = 7.35; SD = 9.10)	
1 year or less	89 (22.2%)
Between 2 and 4 years	129 (32.2%)
Between 5 and 9 years	105 (26.2%)
10 years or more	78 (19.5%)

Note: M = Mean; SD = Standard-deviation

Source: Authors own work

2.2. Measures

Flourishing Scale. Was assessed using the eight items developed by Diener et al. (2010; e.g., *I am optimistic about my future*) and later adapted to the Portuguese population by Junça-Silva and Caetano (2013). All items were positively worded, meaning that higher scores reflected stronger perceptions of personal competence. The scale showed adequate internal consistency

both in the present study and in previous research, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.81 to 0.87.

Short Smith Wellbeing Questionnaire (Short-SWELL). Workplace well-being was measured using the ten items developed by Smith and Smith (2017) [e.g., *My job provides me with a high level of well-being (e.g., satisfaction, happiness)*], which were recently employed in a Portuguese sample by Barroqueiro (2022). Results were calculated by computing the mean of all item scores. Higher scores correspond to higher levels of well-being. The scale demonstrated high internal consistency in both the present and previous studies, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.90 to 0.93.

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-3). Engagement was measured using three items from the shortened version of the UWES-9 (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003; Schaufeli et al., 2019), covering the dimensions of vigour (*At my work, I feel bursting with energy*), dedication (*I am enthusiastic about my job*), and absorption (*I am immersed in my work*). Item 1 was selected for its relevance to energy levels, the defining feature of vigour; item 2 for its alignment with dedication and job involvement; and item 3 for its capacity to capture deep concentration at work. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for this study and previous validation studies ranged between 0.77 and 0.86.

Employee Retention Questionnaire. Talent retention was assessed using four items developed by Salman et al. (2014; e.g., *I intend to remain in this job until retirement*). As in the scale's original validation study, internal consistency initially fell below the recommended threshold. However, after removing item 2, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient increased to 0.72, indicating acceptable reliability.

All questionnaires were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5), depending on participants' level of agreement with each statement.

Sociodemographic questions. To characterise the sample, sociodemographic questions were included (e.g., gender, generational cohort, educational level).

Control variables. Gender and age were used as control variables, as several studies (e.g., Chillakuri, 2020; Gupta, 2019; Riekhoff & Järnefelt, 2022) suggest that men tend to report higher satisfaction with talent retention practices (e.g., supervisor support, career opportunities, work-life balance) than women (Kumari & Kaur, 2021). Furthermore, older employees tend to exhibit greater commitment and are less likely to leave the organisation than younger ones (Snyman & Ferreira, 2023). Ganguli and Padhy (2023) add that members of Generation Z are highly ambitious and tend to leave jobs that fail to meet their expectations.

2.3. Procedures

Data collection was conducted online. The questionnaire link was distributed via email and shared on the professional networks of the research team. A brief summary of the study objectives and information about informed consent was included at the top of the questionnaire, ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of responses. Data analysis was carried out using SPSS and AMOS software.

3. Results

3.1. Preliminary analyses

To assess multivariate normality, Mardia's coefficient was used (Mardia, 1980), calculated through the online tool available at <https://webpower.psychstat.org/models/kurtosis/>. This resource enabled the computation of skewness and kurtosis coefficients, as well as the associated p-values. The results confirmed that the data met the criteria for multivariate normality ($Mardia_{skewness} = 8.96, p = 0.69$; $Mardia_{kurtosis} = 5.47, p = 0.34$), since the standardised Mardia coefficient did not exceed the 5% significance level ($p > 0.05$; Hossain et al., 2022; Mardia et al., 2024). Additionally, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients for all variables were within the recommended range of $[-1.5; 1.5]$ (Ventura-León et al., 2023).

To examine whether results were affected by Common Method Bias, Harman's single-factor test was conducted. The unrotated solution explained 49.0% of the total variance, remaining below the 50.0% threshold recommended by Kock et al. (2021).

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) exceeded the recommended value of 0.50, and Composite Reliability (CR) was above 0.70, confirming convergent validity (Cheung et al., 2024). Additionally, the Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) was lower than the AVE, indicating discriminant validity (Acar et al., 2023).

A significant correlation was observed among all study variables (Table 2). However, gender showed no significant correlations with the main variables, suggesting that results were not influenced by this factor. Age, on the other hand, appeared to affect talent retention. Consequently, a multiple regression analysis was performed, including age as a covariate to isolate its effect on the dependent variable. The results showed that even after controlling for age, flourishing, workplace well-being, and engagement maintained a significant and positive impact on talent retention.

Table 2
Descriptive statistics, reliability indices, and correlations among study variables

Variable	M	SD	CR	AVE	MSV	1	2	3	4
1. Talent retention	2.80 ¹	0.96	0.84	0.80	0.70	(0.72)			
2. Flourishing	3.64 ¹	0.76	0.87	0.70	0.68	0.600**	(0.83)		
3. Well-being	3.37 ¹	0.97	0.95	0.85	0.78	0.610**	0.822**	(0.93)	
4. Engagement	3.26 ¹	1.07	0.91	0.88	0.79	0.641**	0.789**	0.735**	(0.86)
Sex ²	-	-	-	-	-	- 0.048	- 0.082	- 0.036	- 0.096
Age	38.18	11.32	-	-	-	0.289**	0.077	0.045	0.222**

Note: N = 401; ** $p < 0.001$; M = Mean; SD = Standard-deviation; CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted

¹Scale ranging from 1 to 5; Cronbach's Alpha are in brackets

²Sex: 0 = Female; 1 = Male

Source: Authors own work

A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to determine whether the observed variables adequately represented the underlying latent constructs (Widaman & Helm, 2023). The fit indices indicated that the model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the sample data: [$\chi^2_{(112)} = 2.37, p < 0.001$, GFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.96, TLI = 0.95, RMSEA = 0.05, LO90 = 0.05, HI90 = 0.06]. Finally, the hypotheses established based on the literature review were tested.

3.2. Hypothesis testing

To test the proposed hypotheses, multiple linear regression analyses and a serial mediation model were conducted. The analysis began by examining the direct impact of flourishing on talent retention. The results indicated a significantly positive effect ($\beta = 0.600, t = 14.968, p < 0.001$; Hypothesis 1). Additionally, the model was found to be linear [$F(1, 399) = 224.047, p < 0.001$], and flourishing explained 36.0% of the variance in employees' intention to remain within the organisation ($R^2 = 0.360$), confirming it as a driver of personal and professional development.

Subsequently, the mediating role of workplace well-being in the relationship between flourishing and talent retention was examined (Hypothesis 2). The findings revealed that flourishing had a significant positive effect on workplace well-being ($\beta = 0.822, t = 28.825, p < 0.001$). Moreover, when workplace well-being was introduced into the model as a mediating variable, the direct effect of flourishing on talent retention decreased but remained statistically significant, dropping from $\beta = 0.600 (p < 0.001)$ to $\beta = 0.329 (p < 0.001)$. This indicates a partial mediation effect of workplace well-being, as an indirect effect was observed (Sobel Z = 4.736, $p < 0.001$; Preacher, 2025). These results suggest that in work environments that promote

flourishing (e.g., career development opportunities, autonomy, creativity), employees are more likely to enhance their skills and express a desire to stay in the organisation.

It was also found that workplace well-being had a positive effect on engagement ($B = 0.803$, $SE = 0.037$, 95% CI [0.292, 0.806]) and on talent retention ($B = 0.592$, $SE = 0.040$, 95% CI [0.514, 0.669]), thus supporting Hypothesis 3.

To test the separate indirect effects of workplace well-being and engagement, Hayes's (2018) PROCESS macro (Model 6) for SPSS was used. The results showed that workplace well-being ($B = 0.242$, $SE = 0.067$, 95% CI [0.109, 0.375]) and engagement ($B = 0.280$, $SE = 0.055$, 95% CI [0.171, 0.390]) both mediated the relationship between flourishing and talent retention. The results confirmed a sequential mediation effect, whereby flourishing positively influenced talent retention through workplace well-being and engagement ($B = 0.563$, $SE = 0.089$, 95% CI [0.390, 0.741], $p < 0.001$; Hypothesis 4).

Subsequently, comparisons were made between the three indirect effects to assess whether they had equivalent impacts on the relationship between flourishing and talent retention (Table 3). It was found that the indirect effect of flourishing on talent retention through workplace well-being was the strongest ($B = 0.254$), followed by the indirect effect via engagement ($B = 0.222$), and finally the sequential mediation effect ($B = 0.085$).

Table 3

Comparison of indirect effects: the mediating role of workplace well-being and engagement

Effects	Bootstrapping CI			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Lower	Upper
<i>Total indirect effect</i>				
Model 1: Flourishing → Workplace well-being → Talent retention	0.254	0.083	0.091	0.417
Model 2: Flourishing → Engagement → Talent retention	0.222	0.053	0.125	0.333
Model 3: Flourishing → Workplace well-being → Engagement → Talent retention	0.085	0.027	0.038	0.145
<i>Contrasts</i>				
Model 1 versus Model 2	0.032	0.112	0.190	0.249
Model 1 versus Model 3	0.169	0.092	0.013	0.346
Model 2 versus Model 3	0.136	0.049	0.053	0.245

Note: B = Unstandardized beta; SE = Standard error; CI = Confidence intervals

Source: Author's own work

These results suggest that flourishing enhances levels of well-being and, in turn, increases employees' engagement with their tasks and with the organisation itself, which is reflected in their intention to remain within it.

3.3. Complementary analysis

During the literature review, it was found that several studies (e.g., Ganguli & Padhy, 2023; Riekhoff & Järnefelt, 2022; Snyman & Ferreira, 2023) indicated that talent retention is influenced by both personal and organisational factors. In this regard, a mean comparison analysis was conducted based on sociodemographic variables. Gender and age were not included, as they had already been analysed previously.

It is important to note that all responses were obtained using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (5), reflecting participants' level of agreement with each statement. The scores for each construct were calculated by summing the values assigned to the respective items, with higher mean scores indicating higher levels of the respective construct. For ease of interpretation, the results of the mean comparison analysis are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4

Talent retention: mean differences according to sociodemographic variables

Variable	Test	Highest mean values
Generational cohort	$F_{(3, 397)} = 12.087^{**}$	Baby Bommer
Educational qualifications	$F_{(2, 398)} = 0.348$	Below bachelor's degree
Job role	$F_{(3, 397)} = 17.169^{**}$	Managerial
Organisational tenure	$F_{(3, 397)} = 10.603^{**}$	10 years or more

Note: $N = 401$; $^{**}p < 0.001$; M = Mean; SD = Standard-deviation

Source: Author's own work

Given the results, it is possible to conclude that participants belonging to the Baby Boomer generation, those in managerial roles, and those with tenure equal to or greater than ten years are the ones who express the strongest intention to remain in the organisation.

4. Discussion

This study aimed to understand how flourishing influences talent retention in the workplace. It also sought to explore the extent to which well-being and engagement operate as serial mediators between these two constructs. The findings confirmed the first research hypothesis, showing that flourishing positively influences talent retention. This aligns with the conclusions of Amarakoon and Colley (2022). Similarly, Naim and Ozyilmaz (2022) argue that flourishing fosters an environment conducive to personal and professional growth, which contributes to reducing turnover intentions. Willen et al. (2022) further emphasise that

flourishing in the workplace manifests through factors such as identification with the purpose of one's role, the experience of positive emotions, and the development of meaningful interpersonal relationships. These elements contribute to increased engagement, which helps explain the link between flourishing and talent retention. Manhal (2024) adds that when employees perceive that their organisation values their well-being and development, they tend to demonstrate greater loyalty and commitment to their roles. These conclusions are consistent with the present study, which found that employees experiencing high levels of flourishing are more likely to remain within the organisation. Thus, organisations that adopt strategies to foster flourishing tend to reduce turnover rates and create environments that support productivity and innovation (Porgoli et al., 2021).

Hypothesis 2, which posited that flourishing positively predicts workplace well-being (H2a) and engagement (H2b), was also supported by the data analysis. The results are consistent with previous findings by Redelinguys and Rothmann (2020) and VanderWeele (2020), who identified flourishing as a significant predictor of workplace well-being. Likewise, Lebares et al. (2021) observed that employees with high levels of flourishing tend to exhibit greater resilience, lower susceptibility to negative emotional states, and consequently, higher levels of psychological, emotional, and social well-being. As highlighted by Fave (2020), flourishing was also found to be positively associated with engagement. These conclusions are aligned with the studies of Imran et al. (2020), who suggest that well-being acts as a catalyst, converting the state of flourishing into more active work engagement. In this process, employees tend to exhibit greater vigour, dedication, and absorption in their tasks (Redelinguys & Rothmann, 2020). Understanding this mediating process is essential for implementing management practices focused on well-being, performance optimisation, and talent retention (Al Aina & Atan, 2020).

Statistical analyses confirmed that workplace well-being has a positive impact on employee engagement and their intention to remain with the organisation, thereby supporting Hypothesis 3. These findings align with Gelencsér et al. (2023), who highlight the central role of well-being in fostering positive organisational attitudes. Riekhoff and Järnefelt (2022) further states that organisational environments that promote employees' physical, psychological, and social well-being tend to enhance their engagement with tasks and organisational goals. This relationship confirms the importance of organisational practices that go beyond efficiency and prioritise health and quality of work life (Sirgy & Lee, 2017). Engagement—understood as a positive psychological state characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2019)—thus emerges as both a behavioural and emotional response to the organisation's

investment in employee well-being (Redelinguys & Rothmann, 2020). The results also showed that well-being directly influences talent retention. These conclusions are consistent with the findings of Nzewi and Audu (2023), who argue that employee retention is not solely driven by financial incentives or career opportunities. Emotional and relational factors that contribute to overall satisfaction and a sense of belonging also play a decisive role. Therefore, the sequential mediation proposed in the theoretical model was confirmed, as well-being was shown to increase engagement, which in turn enhanced the intention to stay—consistent with research by Desiana et al. (2024). This sequential process highlights the importance of integrated talent management approaches that consider both individual and organisational factors and promote healthy and stimulating work environments (Tan et al., 2024). These findings are particularly relevant in a highly competitive context marked by talent scarcity, where the ability to retain qualified employees largely depends on the creation of conditions that support well-being and personal and professional development (Murthy, 2022).

The fourth hypothesis, which proposed that well-being and engagement function as sequential mediators in the relationship between flourishing and talent retention, was also supported. The results confirmed this serial mediation, showing that flourishing positively influences talent retention through increased workplace well-being, which in turn enhances engagement. These findings are supported by VanderWeele (2020), who conceptualises flourishing as encompassing multiple dimensions of human well-being, including purpose, interpersonal relationships, and positive psychological functioning. For this reason, flourishing is considered a foundational variable in promoting occupational health. Imran et al. (2020) further argue that workplace well-being functions as a facilitating mechanism that transforms flourishing into engagement, thereby reinforcing employees' emotional and behavioural connection to the organisation. In line with this, Ho and Chan (2022) demonstrate that high levels of flourishing significantly increase organisational engagement by promoting fulfilment and self-actualisation. The relevance of engagement as a mediator is also underscored by Fave (2020), who highlights the importance of positive emotions and a sense of purpose in daily work activities. Tan et al. (2024) also stress that engagement plays a key role in reducing turnover intentions, as engaged employees tend to exhibit greater loyalty and commitment. These results are further corroborated by Desiana et al. (2024), whose study shows that well-being and engagement are critical mediating variables in the relationship between psychological well-being and employees' decision to stay. The validation of the sequential mediation model reinforces the need for organisations to implement integrated talent management strategies. Promoting

flourishing must be accompanied by initiatives that ensure employees' physical, emotional, and social well-being. Such practices not only support employee development but also translate into competitive advantages for organisations in a context increasingly defined by talent scarcity.

4.1. Theoretical and practical contributions

This study contributes to the advancement of the literature by integrating, within a sequential mediation model, the role of well-being and engagement in the relationship between flourishing and talent retention. Although previous research has established the individual influence of each of these constructs, studies examining the sequential mechanism linking flourishing, well-being, and engagement remain scarce. This research clarifies the foundational role of flourishing in promoting positive work environments and demonstrates that well-being and engagement are essential mediating mechanisms in strengthening employees' intention to remain within the organisation. Moreover, the findings reinforce the relevance of the eudaimonic approach to flourishing in organisational settings, thereby enriching the theoretical understanding of the factors that underpin talent retention.

Additionally, by embedding the analysis of flourishing within a context of technological advancement and scientific innovation, the study offers an updated perspective on the need to balance operational efficiency with human development. In this sense, it highlights the importance of recognising flourishing as a strategic capability for ensuring organisational sustainability in an era of accelerated digital transformation. Furthermore, the study introduces an ethical dimension into the talent retention debate, showing that promoting employee well-being is not only a matter of strategic efficiency but also a moral imperative.

From a practical standpoint, the study provides clear guidance for talent management in organisations. The promotion of flourishing should be incorporated through initiatives that support personal development, autonomy, and professional recognition. The findings also underscore the importance of investing in employee well-being through the creation of psychologically safe, healthy, and life-enhancing work environments. Additionally, the study shows that increasing levels of engagement—through challenging tasks, transparent communication, and recognition—is crucial for talent retention. Finally, it calls attention to the ethical responsibility of organisations to create conditions that foster personal and professional fulfilment among employees, as an integral part of their strategic mission in an increasingly digital world.

4.2. Limitations and suggestions for future studies

Despite its valuable contributions, this study presents several limitations that should be acknowledged. One important limitation lies in the exclusive reliance on self-report questionnaires, which may have introduced biases not only related to individual perception but also to social desirability — particularly in responses concerning well-being and engagement. Although the instruments used were standardised and validated, the inherently subjective nature of self-report methods may affect the objectivity and generalisability of the findings. To mitigate this limitation, the use of mixed methods is recommended, such as incorporating semi-structured interviews with talent managers or supervisors to enable data triangulation.

Another limitation relates to the use of a convenience sample and snowball sampling technique, both of which restrict the generalisability of the findings. To address this issue, future research should employ probabilistic sampling strategies and include participants from various industries and geographic regions, in order to capture greater cultural and organisational diversity.

Furthermore, future studies could incorporate moderating variables such as organisational culture, leadership style, and supervisor support, as these factors may influence the strength of the relationships proposed in the model. Including such variables could offer a more nuanced understanding of the mechanisms driving talent retention.

Lastly, future research could adopt case study approaches within specific organisations, combined with generational analyses (e.g., Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z), to capture the specific needs and expectations of different employee profiles. This approach is particularly important for generating strategic recommendations tailored to age diversity and the emerging demands of the labour market.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyse the influence of flourishing on talent retention, considering the mediating role of workplace well-being and engagement. The results confirmed all the proposed hypotheses, showing that flourishing exerts a direct impact on employee retention, as well as an indirect effect, sequentially mediated by well-being and engagement. These findings highlight the importance of adopting an integrated approach that combines individual and organisational factors in talent management. They also demonstrate that retention cannot be fully explained by extrinsic incentives such as salary or career advancement opportunities. On the

contrary, employees' decisions to stay are strongly influenced by subjective experiences of well-being, engagement, and a sense of purpose at work.

The sequential mediation model proposed in this study represents a conceptual advance over earlier models that examined the impact of flourishing, well-being, or engagement in isolation. Whereas many studies focus exclusively on direct relationships between two variables, the present model offers insight into the dynamic interplay between individual and contextual factors. It highlights the central role of well-being as a linking mechanism between personal flourishing and organisational involvement. By integrating these three dimensions—flourishing, well-being, and engagement—as part of a coordinated process, the study contributes to a more comprehensive and realistic understanding of talent retention in contemporary organisational settings. This approach clearly departs from traditional models based on extrinsic motivators by demonstrating that retention is strongly influenced by employees' subjective experiences of well-being and purpose.

In an increasingly competitive organisational environment marked by a shortage of qualified professionals, investing in employee well-being and personal development is no longer an optional strategy—it is an essential condition for long-term sustainability. Promoting flourishing, combined with practices that foster engagement and well-being, constitutes a distinctive strategy to attract, motivate, and retain qualified talent.

Beyond its practical implications for human resource management, this study also makes a theoretical contribution to the literature by underscoring the centrality of flourishing as a driver of organisational transformation in a context shaped by technological innovation and emerging ethical challenges. Future research may expand on this line of inquiry by exploring moderating variables and designing longitudinal studies that allow the mechanisms identified here to be tested over time.

In summary, the construction of work environments based on flourishing, well-being, and engagement not only enhances productivity but also supports the development of more humane, resilient, and sustainable organisations for the future.

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Appendix 1 - Statement from the Ethics Committee of ISG/CIGEST



Ethic Commission ISG / CIGEST

Reference: CIG_0010.14/2025

Date: May 13, 2025

Requested by: Professor Rosa Rodrigues

Title: "Unraveling the link between flourishing and talent retention: workplace well-being and engagement as serial mediation mechanisms"

Authors: Rosa Isabel Rodrigues and João Luís Barros Taveira

The Ethics Committee of Instituto Superior de Gestão / CIGEST reviewed your application to obtain ethical assessment for your manuscript. Documents were analysed by professor Miguel Varela, Professor Ricardo Ferro and Professor Mariana Marques.

The commission has reviewed the manuscript and the applied questionnaire, validating that anonymity and confidentiality have been assured. Also, the commission notices that an informed consent was presented to the participants.

None of the researchers participating in this study took part in the decision making and voting procedure for this assessment.

Based on the documents review, the EC-ISG/CIGEST states a favorable ethical opinion about the request.



The President of Ethics Commission ISG / CIGEST

Ethics Commission ISG / CIGEST, Rua Professor Reinaldo dos Santos, nº 46 A, 1500-552 Lisboa (Benfica)

Appendix 2 - Official confirmation of manuscript submission to the journal *Wellbeing, Space and Society*

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