

Employment within a socially innovative organization as a source of job satisfaction and well-being at work? Insights from social enterprises in the elderly home care in Wallonia

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Abstract

The original study presented in this paper compares job satisfaction and well-being of nonprofit social enterprises (SE) employees taking part in social innovation (SI) vs. not taking part in SI (NSI). Our survey considers 10 SE of the elderly home care sector in Wallonia (1134 workers). Articulating insights from work psychology, occupational health and socio-economics, this article builds on the concepts of work motivation, SI and workplace innovation. Two conflicting hypotheses are tested: 1) Because SI conveys a clear social mission and novelty and challenge, thus strengthening both intrinsic and prosocial employees' motivations, the fact to work in a SI increases SI employees' job satisfaction and well-being, compared to NSI employees; 2) SI, when simply understood as service innovation, isn't an element strong enough. Instead, employees' job satisfaction and well-being increase only when workplace innovation principles are implemented. Results confirm the second hypothesis. In conclusion, implications for social entrepreneurs and scholars are examined.

1. Introduction

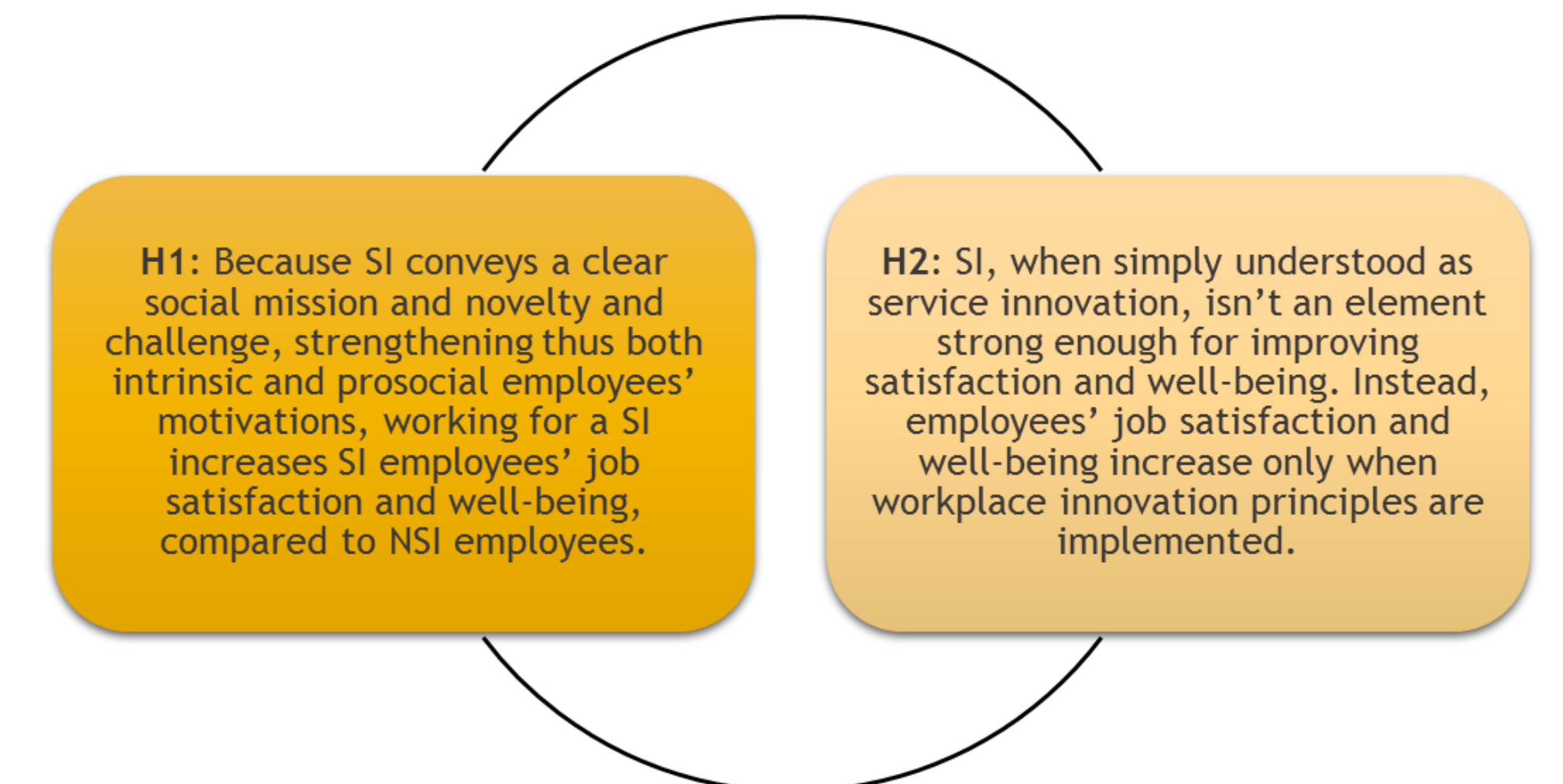
⇒ **Paradox:** Notwithstanding the lack of monetary and substantial incentives offered to SE workers 1) rapid growth of the SE employment and 2) SE employees are more satisfied and experience more well-being at work of those of for-profit organisations and public sector.

⇒ **Explanations:** SE employees are intrinsically and pro-socially motivated and SE respond to these motivations.

⇒ **Main aims:**

- To verify if Social innovation (SI) holding a strong social mission, novelty and challenge as built-in elements further strengthen employees' job satisfaction and well-being compared to no on-going innovative projects (NSI)
- To evaluate if the strengthening of SE employees' job satisfaction and well-being is better explained by IS alone in itself or by "workplace innovation" (Eeckelaert et al., 2012).

Two conflicting hypotheses



2. Procedure

2.1 Participants

- ⇒ Dataset from WISDOM study (multidisciplinary, multiple case study on SI in the home care sector for elderly people in Wallonia)
- ⇒ 1134 employees working in 10 SE [238 SI employees + 896 NSI employees]
- ⇒ Women = 96%; service workers (e.g. nurses, care assistants and home help workers) = 70%; permanent contract = 92%
- ⇒ Socially innovative projects identified and selected following a Delphi procedure (see Callorda Fossati et al., 2017)

2.2 Analyses

Correlation analyses, X^2 , one-sample t-tests, separate independent sample t-tests, and multiple linear regressions.

2.3 Measures

Concept	Scale	Number of items (Cronbach's α)
A. Job satisfaction	- Commitment to the workplace	4 (.724)
	- Meaning of work	3 (.788)
B. Well-being	- Emotional exhaustion	4 (.900)
	- Somatic stress	4 (.715)
C. Management and leadership re-modelling	- Justice	4 (.776)
	- Trust regarding management	1
D. Flexible organisation of work	- Predictability	2 (.644)
	- Work-family conflict	1
E. Working smarter	- Work pace	3 (.778)
	- Place for new ideas	1
F. Continuous development of skills and competences	- Possibilities for development	4 (.694)
G. Modernisation of labour relations	- Influence on work	6 (.721)

(Note: A. and B. = job satisfaction and well-being indicators; C. to G. = Workplace innovation indicators)

3. Results

3.1 Overall means and ranges for job satisfaction and well-being indicators (fig. 1a), and (fig. 1b)



Note for Fig.1a and 1b: Boxes represent the range of the actual answers for each score; vertical lines specify the minimum/maximum possible score values; solid white horizontal lines represent the mean score; dotted white horizontal lines are the midpoint of the scale (i.e. the test value in one-sample t-test analyses). *** = $p < .000$

Figure 1a

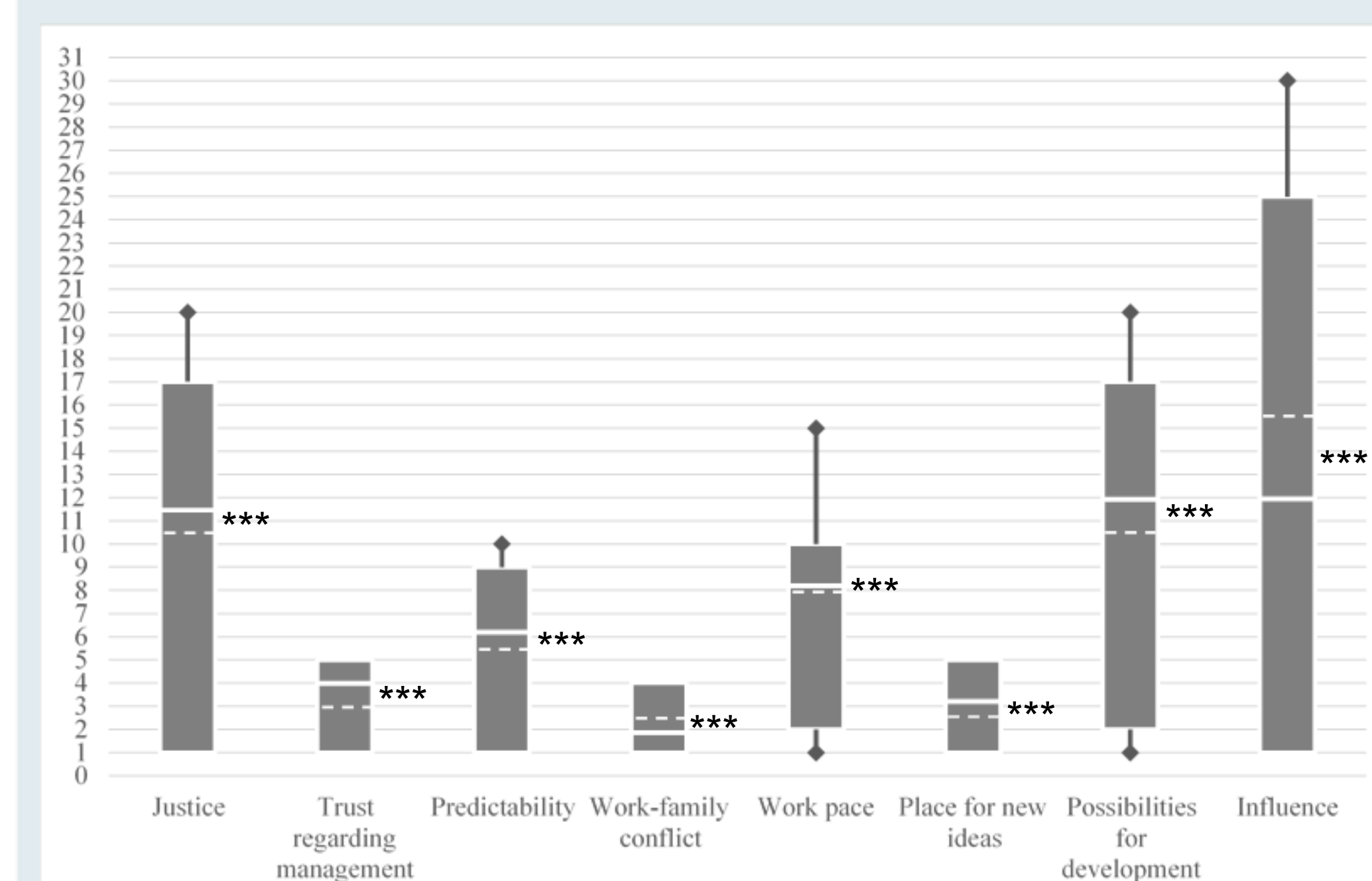


Figure 1b

3.2 H1 testing : SI-NSI differences in job satisfaction and well-being indicators (Fig. 2)

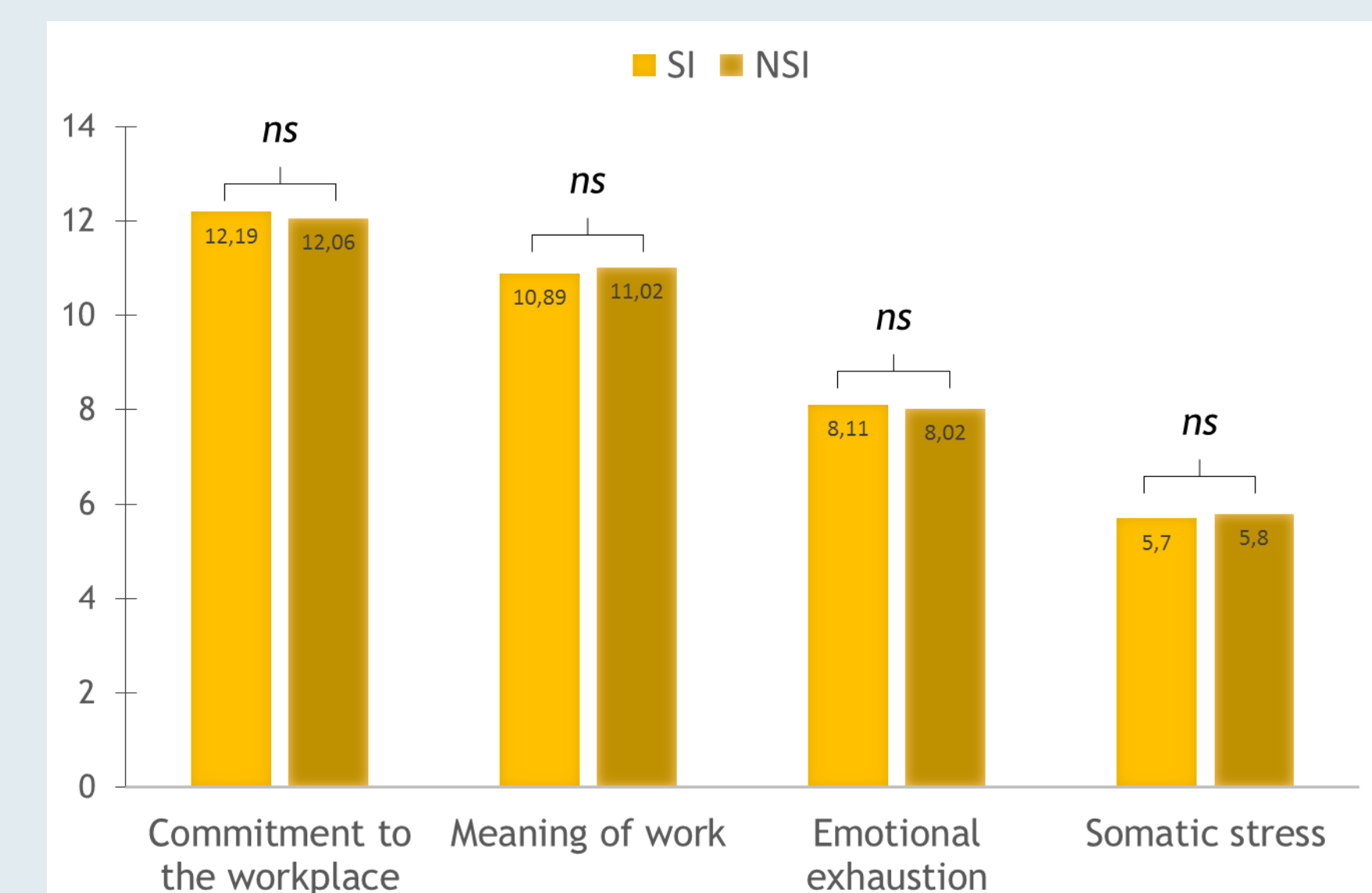


Figure 2

3.3 H2 testing : job satisfaction and well-being indicators regressed on SI-NSI and workplace innovation indicators

	Commitment to the workplace	Meaning of work	Emotional exhaustion	Somatic stress symptoms
1. Social innovation (yes-no)	-,031	,020	,004	,006
2. Participative and just management and leadership				
Justice	,204***	,018	-,139**	-,162**
Trust regarding management	,157***	,098*	,002	,051
3. Flexible organisation of work				
Predictability	,098*	,208***	-,011	-,019
Work-family conflict	-,103**	-,028	,279***	,215***
4. Working smarter				
Work pace	-,114***	-,036	,207***	,187***
Place for new ideas	-,007	-,006	-,067	,027
5. Continuous development of skills and competences				
Possibilities for development	,337***	,521***	-,031	,006
6. Modernisation of labour relations				
Influence on work	,048	-,062~	-,025	,023
R ²	.495	.448	.214	.143

4. Discussion

⇒ Overall, participants declare to perceive their work as highly meaningful and to be largely committed to their workplace. They also report a low level of somatic stress symptoms and, a rather low level of emotional exhaustion.

⇒ H1 rejected : SI alone isn't an element strong enough for improve satisfaction and well-being.

⇒ H2 supported : workplace innovation indicators (but not IS alone) are strong predictors of workers' job satisfaction and well-being

⇒ Our results suggest that enhancing intrinsic and prosocial motivation, as the fact to work in a enterprise promoting innovation of service should do, is not sufficient to have an effective impact on job satisfaction and well-being of the workers. Instead, SE should pay a greater attention to the possibility to innovate in the workplace.