

Stress Among Hospitality Professionals: Probing Causes and Interventions for Improved Work Performance

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Abstract: This study examined stress among hospitality professionals by determining their stress levels, identifying the perceived causes of stress, assessing its effects on work performance, identifying stress-reduction activities implemented in the workplace, and proposing preventive intervention strategies. The study employed a mixed-methods research design integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data were gathered using a modified stress assessment questionnaire based on the HSE Management Standards Indicator Tool, while qualitative data were obtained through open-ended responses from hospitality professionals working in front desk, housekeeping, and food and beverage departments. Data were analyzed using weighted mean, frequency count, ranking, and thematic analysis. The findings revealed that hospitality professionals experienced a moderate level of stress in terms of work demands, while stress levels related to role clarity, support, and workplace relationships were generally low. The primary causes of stress were multitasking during peak hours, aggressive customer behavior, frequent schedule changes, and difficult customer interactions. The findings further showed that stress affects work performance through service delivery challenges, reduced motivation and work engagement, workplace strain and interpersonal difficulties, intentions to leave the workplace, and productivity challenges during peak operations. In terms of stress management, shift rotations, time-off policies, and team-building activities were the most commonly implemented interventions, while counseling services and mental health awareness programs were the least implemented. The study concludes that operational demands and customer-related pressures are the major contributors to stress among hospitality professionals. It is recommended that hospitality organizations strengthen employee support systems, improve workload management practices, promote workplace well-being, and implement comprehensive stress management programs to enhance employee performance and service quality.

Keywords: Stress, Hospitality Professionals, Work Performance, Stress Management, Employee Well-Being, Hospitality Industry.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The hospitality industry has become one of the most dynamic and rapidly expanding sectors in the global economy. Tourism, travel, and hospitality together account for a significant share of worldwide economic activity, generating employment and driving revenue for many countries. According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (2023), the sector contributed over 7.6% of global GDP and created millions of jobs, underscoring its role as both a driver of growth and a source of livelihood. Unlike industries that depend primarily on automated systems or physical goods, hospitality is inherently people-centered. It thrives on the quality of interpersonal relationships, the service delivered by employees, and the creation of memorable guest experiences. As such, human capital is the backbone of hospitality organizations. The professionals

who work in hotels, resorts, restaurants, and related businesses are expected to consistently provide excellent service under often challenging conditions. This makes the industry both rewarding and demanding, as employees are continually placed in high-pressure situations that can easily lead to stress.

As hospitality organizations continue to expand and compete in an increasingly globalized market, expectations for service excellence have intensified. Guests now demand not only efficiency and quality but also personalized, emotionally engaging service experiences. These rising expectations place added pressure on hospitality professionals, who must consistently meet service standards while managing time constraints, operational demands, and diverse customer personalities. The fast-paced and customer-facing nature of hospitality work requires

employees to remain attentive, courteous, and composed at all times, even in the face of difficult situations. Over time, the accumulation of these pressures can result in elevated stress levels that negatively affect both employee well-being and organizational performance.

Stress, as an occupational phenomenon, is not unique to hospitality, yet it is especially pronounced in this industry because of the constant emphasis on customer satisfaction, service excellence, and efficiency. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) defined stress as the psychological and physiological response that occurs when an individual perceives the demands of a situation as exceeding their personal resources. Within hospitality, this manifests in situations such as long working hours, unpredictable shifts, and the pressure of attending to the diverse and often unpredictable needs of guests. The emotional intensity of the service encounter, where employees must often regulate their own emotions to meet organizational expectations, heightens this stress (Grandey, 2000). Consequently, stress in hospitality is not simply an individual concern but a systemic issue embedded within the structure and demands of service work.

Several stressors are consistently identified in the literature as central to the hospitality profession. One of the most significant contributors is workload pressure. Hospitality professionals frequently experience long working hours, understaffed shifts, and peak-season demands that require multitasking and sustained physical effort (Hsieh et al., 2020). Irregular work schedules, including rotating shifts, split schedules, night duties, and weekend work, further disrupt employees' work-life balance and recovery time. These scheduling challenges often lead to fatigue, decreased motivation, and prolonged stress exposure, particularly among frontline service employees.

Emotional labor also represents a major source of stress in hospitality work. Hochschild (1983) introduced emotional labor as the regulation of emotions to conform to organizational display rules. In hospitality settings, employees are expected to display friendliness, patience, and positivity regardless of their personal emotional state. Constant interaction with guests—including those who are demanding, dissatisfied, or aggressive—requires employees to suppress negative emotions and maintain professional composure. Studies have shown that prolonged emotional labor contributes to emotional exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, and burnout among hospitality professionals (Karatepe & Aleshinloye, 2009). This emotional strain is further intensified when employees lack adequate support from supervisors or colleagues.

Role ambiguity and role overload further exacerbate stress levels in hospitality environments. Employees are often expected to perform multiple tasks beyond their formal job descriptions, especially during peak seasons or special events. When expectations are unclear or conflicting—such as balancing guest satisfaction with operational efficiency—employees may experience confusion, frustration, and anxiety (Kim et al., 2017). These role-related stressors highlight the importance of

organizational clarity and supportive management practices in reducing occupational stress.

Several theoretical frameworks help explain how stress develops and affects employees in high-demand industries like hospitality. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Demerouti et al., 2001) posited that stress arises when job demands—such as workload, time pressure, and emotional demands—exceed available resources like autonomy, training, and social support. In hospitality, high demands are often not matched with sufficient resources, leading to exhaustion and disengagement. Similarly, the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989) emphasized that individuals experience stress when their valued resources, such as energy, time, or emotional capacity, are threatened or depleted. Continuous exposure to demanding work conditions without adequate recovery accelerates resource loss among hospitality professionals. Karasek's Demand-Control-Support (DCS) model (1979) further underscored the role of limited job control and insufficient social support in intensifying stress, conditions commonly reported in hospitality settings.

The consequences of unmanaged stress extend beyond individual well-being and directly affect organizational outcomes. At the individual level, prolonged stress may lead to burnout, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and physical health problems (Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Ganster & Rosen, 2013). Burnout, characterized by emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment, is particularly prevalent in service-oriented professions and undermines employees' engagement and performance. At the organizational level, stress contributes to reduced productivity, increased absenteeism, and high turnover rates—an ongoing challenge in the hospitality industry (Choi et al., 2019). High employee turnover disrupts service continuity, increases training costs, and negatively affects organizational stability.

Stress also has a direct and measurable impact on work performance. Hospitality professionals under stress may experience diminished concentration, impaired decision-making, and reduced attention to detail (Kim et al., 2020). These cognitive effects can lead to service errors, mishandling of guest requests, and decreased service quality. Emotional exhaustion further weakens employee-guest interactions, which are central to customer satisfaction and brand reputation. When stress remains unmanaged, employees may disengage from their roles, providing only minimal service effort rather than proactive and enthusiastic service delivery.

In the broader organizational context, stress poses a strategic challenge to the sustainability and competitiveness of hospitality businesses. Persistent stress contributes to labor shortages, reduced morale, and weakened teamwork, all of which compromise service excellence. These challenges have become even more pronounced in the post-pandemic hospitality landscape, where increased workloads, staffing gaps, and operational uncertainty have intensified employee stress (Giousmpasoglou et al., 2021). Failure to

address stress effectively may discourage individuals from pursuing long-term careers in hospitality, threatening the industry's future workforce. Despite the growing recognition of occupational stress, research focusing specifically on hospitality professionals remains limited, particularly in linking stressors to actual work performance outcomes. Many studies address general workplace stress but overlook the unique emotional, interpersonal, and service-oriented demands of hospitality work. Moreover, while causes of stress are frequently identified, fewer studies explore the coping strategies and organizational interventions that can mitigate stress and improve performance. This gap highlights the need for industry-specific research that integrates stress levels, perceived causes, coping mechanisms, and performance outcomes.

In response to these gaps, the present study investigates stress among hospitality professionals by probing its perceived causes, examining its effects on work performance, and identifying interventions adopted to lessen stress. By integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of stress experiences in hospitality settings. The findings aim to inform hospitality managers, policymakers, and human resource practitioners in designing effective preventive interventions that promote employee well-being, enhance service quality, and support sustainable organizational performance.

➤ *Problem Statement*

This study examined the causes of stress among hospitality professionals and their influence on work performance.

• *Specifically, it Answered the Following Questions:*

- ✓ What is the stress level among hospitality professionals?
- ✓ What are the perceived causes of stress among hospitality professionals?
- ✓ How does stress affect the work performance of hospitality professionals?
- ✓ What are the different activities being implemented to lessen the stress level of hospitality professionals in their work performance?
- ✓ What intervention can be proposed to mitigate stress among hospitality professionals and thereby improved their work performance?

II. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Research Design*

This study employed a mixed methods research design, specifically the embedded mixed method design, to comprehensively examine stress among hospitality professionals and the interventions adopted to improve work performance.

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), an embedded mixed method design involved the collection and integration of both quantitative and qualitative data within a single study, wherein one form of data plays a supportive

role to the other. In this study, the quantitative method served as the primary method, while the qualitative method was embedded as a supplementary component to provide deeper explanation and contextual understanding of the quantitative results.

The quantitative component focused on gathering measurable data regarding the stress levels, perceived causes of stress, effects of stress on work performance, and stress management interventions among hospitality professionals. A structured survey questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale was utilized to obtain numerical data that were statistically analyzed through weighted mean, frequency count, percentage, and ranking.

Meanwhile, the qualitative component was embedded within the study through open-ended questions and follow-up interviews. This qualitative aspect allowed the respondents to share their personal experiences, emotional challenges, coping mechanisms, and perceptions regarding workplace stress and its effects on their performance. The qualitative responses supported and explained the statistical findings by providing narratives and real-life workplace situations experienced by hospitality professionals.

The use of the embedded mixed method design was appropriate for this study because workplace stress in hospitality industry involves both observable patterns and subjective experiences. The quantitative findings identified the extent and common sources of stress, while the qualitative data enriched the interpretation of results by presenting the lived experiences behind the numerical findings. Through the integration of both methods, the study achieved a more holistic and comprehensive understanding of stress among hospitality professionals.

➤ *The Respondents*

The respondents of the study consisted of thirty-five (35) hospitality professionals employed in selected hospitality establishments such as hotels and restaurants within the chosen research locale. These respondents were directly involved in service-oriented roles, including receptionists, food and beverage servers, kitchen staff or cooks, housekeeping personnel, and event organizers.

The respondents were selected using purposive sampling, which allowed the researcher to identify individuals who could provide relevant information regarding workplace stress in the hospitality industry. Purposive sampling was deemed appropriate because the study specifically required respondents who possess direct experiences with hospitality operations and workplace stress conditions.

• *To Qualify as Respondents, Participants Had to Meet the Following Criteria:*

- ✓ They must be currently employed in a hospitality establishment.
- ✓ They must have at least one (1) year of work experience in the hospitality industry.

✓ They must be willing to participate in the study.

A total of thirty-five (35) respondents who met these criteria voluntarily participated in the quantitative survey. From these respondents, selected participants were also invited to participate in the qualitative component through open-ended responses and follow-up interviews. These participants were chosen based on their willingness to share additional experiences related to workplace stress and coping interventions.

The respondents provided valuable insights into the level of stress, causes of stress, activities implemented to lessen stress, and the effects of stress on work performance among hospitality professionals.

➤ Research Instruments

The primary instrument used for data collection was a researcher-made structured questionnaire composed of both close-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire was specifically designed to assess the stress levels, perceived causes of stress, coping interventions, and effects of stress on the work performance of hospitality professionals within the Philippine hospitality setting.

The development of the instrument was anchored on established stress and hospitality-related frameworks and assessment tools. In particular, the questionnaire items were adapted and contextualized from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Management Standards Indicator Tool, which measured workplace stress dimensions such as workload demands, control, support, relationships, role clarity, and organizational change. Additional indicators were patterned after the Hospitality Stress Matrix developed by Yoo (2023), which identified operational stressors commonly experienced by hospitality employees, including emotional labor, guest-related stress, multitasking, and time pressure. Furthermore, selected concepts related to employee satisfaction and work experiences were anchored on the Scale of Satisfaction with Working in Hospitality by Tatsi et al. (2024).

Although these instruments served as conceptual bases, the researcher modified and contextualized the questionnaire items to suit the Philippine hospitality industry setting, considering local workplace practices, organizational culture, and operational conditions commonly experienced by Filipino hospitality professionals.

The quantitative portion of the questionnaire utilized a five-point Likert scale to measure the respondents perceived stress levels and the extent to which specific workplace factors contributed to stress. The instrument included indicators related to workload, multitasking, long working hours, difficult customer interactions, emotional exhaustion, managerial pressure, workplace relationships, and organizational support. It also contained items assessing stress management interventions and coping activities commonly practiced by hospitality professionals.

To support the quantitative findings, an interview guide containing open-ended questions was developed for the embedded qualitative component of the study. The interview guide focused on exploring the respondent's lived experiences, emotional challenges, coping mechanisms, and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of workplace stress interventions. The qualitative data provided additional explanations and contextual understanding of the statistical findings gathered from the survey questionnaire.

To ensure content validity, the research instruments were evaluated by experts in hospitality management and research methodology. Their suggestions and recommendations were incorporated to improve the clarity, relevance, organization, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items.

Pilot testing was also conducted among a small group of hospitality workers who were not included in the actual respondents of the study. The pilot test helped identify ambiguous statements and assess the reliability and comprehensibility of the instrument prior to its full administration.

➤ Quantification of Variables

The variables in this study were quantified using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire designed to measure the stress levels, perceived causes of stress, and stress management interventions among hospitality professionals. The quantitative responses were assigned numerical values to facilitate statistical analysis and interpretation.

For the stress level indicators under the dimensions of Demands, Role, and Support and Relationships, respondents rated each statement using a five-point Likert scale. The corresponding numerical values and verbal interpretations are presented below:

Table 1 Quantification of Variables

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21 – 5.00	Very High
4	3.41 – 4.20	High
3	2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
2	1.81 – 2.60	Low
1	1.00 – 1.80	Very Low

The weighted mean was utilized to determine the overall stress level experienced by hospitality professionals based on the responses gathered from the survey questionnaire.

For the perceived causes of stress and activities implemented to lessen stress, frequency count and ranking were used to identify the most common stressors and stress management practices experienced by the respondents.

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For the embedded qualitative component, the responses gathered through open-ended questions and interviews were analyzed thematically to identify recurring themes, patterns, and narratives related to stress experiences, coping strategies, and work performance among hospitality professionals.

➤ Data Collection Procedures

Prior to data collection, formal approval was obtained from the managers or administrators of selected hospitality establishments. Informed consent was also secured from all participants to ensure that ethical standards were properly observed throughout the conduct of the study.

The researcher personally distributed the survey questionnaire to the respondents during scheduled breaks or after work shifts to avoid disruption of operational duties. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and were assured that all information gathered would remain confidential and used solely for academic purposes. Participation in the study was voluntary, and respondents were given the right to withdraw at any stage without any consequence.

The quantitative data collection served as the primary phase of the study. After the retrieval and initial analysis of the survey questionnaire, selected respondents who expressed willingness to provide further insights were invited to participate in follow-up interviews and open-ended discussions for the embedded qualitative component. These interviews were conducted in a quiet and comfortable setting within or near the workplace to encourage openness and honest sharing of experiences.

The qualitative responses were used to support, explain, and enrich the quantitative findings, particularly regarding workplace stress experiences, coping mechanisms, and the effects of stress on work performance. The data collection process was carefully structured to respect the participants' schedules, maintain ethical standards, and ensure the reliability and richness of the gathered information.

➤ Data Analysis Method

The data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches consistent with the embedded mixed method research design employed in the study. For the quantitative component, the survey responses were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequency count, percentage, weighted mean, and ranking. These statistical treatments were utilized to determine the stress levels of hospitality professionals, identify the most common causes of stress, and determine the stress management interventions commonly implemented in the workplace.

The qualitative findings were integrated with the quantitative results to provide additional explanation and contextual understanding of the statistical findings. This integration strengthened the interpretation of results and allowed the study to present a more comprehensive understanding of stress among hospitality professionals.

➤ Statistical Analysis / Qualitative Analysis

The quantitative data gathered from the survey questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Weighted mean scores were computed to determine the perceived intensity of stressors and the effectiveness of stress management interventions among hospitality professionals. Frequency count and ranking were likewise utilized to identify the most common causes of stress and the most frequently implemented stress management activities in hospitality workplaces.

The qualitative data obtained through open-ended responses and follow-up interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved coding the responses, categorizing similar ideas, and identifying recurring themes related to workplace stress experiences, emotional labor, coping mechanisms, and work performance.

The embedded qualitative findings were then integrated with the quantitative results to support and explain the statistical outcomes of the study. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative analyses enabled the researcher to address the research questions comprehensively by combining measurable findings with detailed contextual narratives from hospitality professionals.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ Stress Levels Among Hospitality Professionals

Table 2 Stress Levels Among Hospitality Professionals

Indicators	Front Desk	Housekeeping	F and B	Over All				
	$\bar{x}$	D	$\bar{x}$	D	$\bar{x}$	D	$\bar{x}$	D
Dimension 1: Demands (Workload, Work Patterns, Emotional Labor)								
often feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks I must complete during my shift.	3.89	H	3.50	M	3.65	H	3.68	H
I have insufficient time to complete my duties to the expected standard.	3.40	M	2.50	M	2.82	M	2.91	M

frequently skip breaks due to workload demands.	3.14	M	2.97	M	3.08	M	3.06	M
My job requires multitasking beyond my comfort level.	4.30	H	3.68	H	3.84	H	3.94	H
I feel mentally exhausted at the end of most workdays.	3.57	M	3.31	M	3.47	M	3.45	M
I find it stressful to deal with difficult or irate customers.	3.12	M	3.03	M	3.04	M	3.06	M
I feel emotionally drained after interacting with guests.	2.72	M	2.00	L	2.20	L	2.31	L
I struggle to maintain a positive attitude when facing repeated complaints.	2.74	M	2.52	L	2.61	M	2.62	M
Average	3.36	M	2.94	M	3.09	M	3.13	M
Dimension 2: Role (Clarity and Consistency of Responsibilities)								
I often feel uncertain about the specific expectations of my role.	2.63	M	2.01	L	2.20	L	2.28	L
I receive conflicting instructions from different supervisors or managers.	2.58	L	2.35	L	2.43	L	2.45	L
I am regularly assigned tasks outside my primary role, which creates unclear boundaries of responsibility	2.60	M	2.40	L	2.50	L	2.50	L
I receive important work information from multiple unco-ordinated sources, which confuses me.	2.58	L	2.36	L	2.47	L	2.47	L
I face frequent policy and procedure changes without proper training, which makes me uncomfortable.	2.74	M	2.34	L	2.54	L	2.54	L
Average	2.63	M	2.29	L	2.43	L	2.45	L
Dimension 3: Support & Relationships (Colleague, Supervisor, and Organizational Support)								
I feel unsupported by my colleagues during high-pressure situations.	3.33	M	2.90	M	3.11	M	3.11	M
I experience tension when communicating with supervisors or managers.	2.59	L	2.39	L	2.49	L	2.49	L
I feel that my contributions are not recognized by management.	2.30	L	2.23	L	2.26	L	2.26	L
I lack access to training or resources needed to perform my job well.	2.60	M	2.14	L	2.28	L	2.34	L
I feel that my workplace does not prioritize employee well-being.	2.63	M	2.04	L	2.39	L	2.34	L
Average	2.69	M	2.34	L	2.51	L	2.51	L

The findings revealed that hospitality professionals experienced a moderate level of stress, particularly in relation to workload demands, multitasking, emotional labor, and work patterns. This suggests that stress has become a common part of hospitality operations due to the highly demanding and customer-oriented nature of the industry. Although the stress level was only moderate, the findings indicated that hospitality professionals continuously experience pressure while fulfilling service expectations and operational responsibilities.

The findings support the Job Demands–Resources (JD–R) Model of Bakker and Demerouti (2007), which explained that excessive job demands such as workload pressure, multitasking, emotional labor, and long working hours contribute significantly to employee stress when organizational resources are insufficient. In hospitality settings, employees are expected to maintain service quality

while simultaneously responding to customer concerns, operational demands, and time-sensitive tasks.

Similarly, the findings align with Karasek's Job Demand-Control Model (1979), which stated that stress becomes more severe when employees experience high work demands but possess limited control over their work activities. Hospitality employees commonly work under strict operational procedures, unpredictable customer requests, and immediate service expectations, which may increase psychological strain and emotional exhaustion.

The results are likewise consistent with Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome Theory (1976), which explains that prolonged exposure to stressful conditions may eventually result in physical and emotional exhaustion. Although respondents in this study only reported moderate stress levels, continuous exposure to operational pressure

may gradually lead to burnout if organizations fail to provide sufficient support systems and stress management interventions.

The findings also support previous hospitality studies. Karatepe and Uludag (2007) emphasized that workload pressure and emotional labor are major causes of stress among hotel employees. Jung and Yoon (2014) similarly found that excessive workload and emotional exhaustion negatively affect employee engagement and job satisfaction in hospitality organizations. Alola et al. (2019) further explained that hospitality employees are highly vulnerable to stress because of demanding customer interactions and irregular work schedules.

Recent studies continue to reinforce these observations. De Clercq et al. (2021) noted that multitasking and service pressure significantly contribute to employee fatigue and emotional strain in customer-contact industries. Likewise, Yildiz and Harmanci Seren (2023) explained that hospitality professionals frequently experience stress due to staff shortages, high guest expectations, and operational unpredictability, especially after the global pandemic period where work demands increased while workforce support became limited.

The findings also align with Schaufeli and Bakker (2004), who explained that prolonged exposure to high job demands may reduce employee engagement and increase emotional exhaustion. More recent literature by Huertas-Valdivia et al. (2022) similarly emphasized that emotional

exhaustion among hospitality workers is strongly associated with repetitive multitasking and continuous guest interaction.

The qualitative responses of the respondents further reinforced the statistical findings. Several respondents described how simultaneous responsibilities during peak operational periods contribute to mental exhaustion and stress. Front-line employees particularly expressed difficulties in managing guest concerns, operational tasks, and service expectations simultaneously. These narratives strongly validate the quantitative findings that multitasking and operational pressure remain major stressors within hospitality workplaces.

The findings additionally revealed that workload-related stressors contribute more significantly to stress than role ambiguity or interpersonal relationships. Although support and role dimensions were interpreted as lower stress contributors, some respondents still reported communication difficulties and insufficient support during busy operations. This suggests that organizational support systems still play an important role in reducing employee strain, particularly during peak service periods.

Overall, the findings indicated that stress among hospitality professionals is largely operational in nature and is strongly associated with workload demands, multitasking, emotional labor, and time pressure rather than organizational conflict or interpersonal problems.

➤ *Perceived Causes of Stress Among Hospitality Professionals*

Table 3 Perceived Causes of Stress Among Hospitality Professionals

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
Expected to multitask during peak hours	22	1.5
Encountering customers with aggressive behavior	22	1.5
Frequent change of shifts and schedule	20	3.0
Engaging with disrespectful customers	19	4.5
Exposure to interactions within culturally diverse environments	19	4.5
Negative customer feedback	18	6.5
Handling extended periods of guest interaction	18	6.5
Resolving customers' complaints	17	9
Working overtime without adequate compensation	17	9
Hitting the performance target	17	9
Reorganization of management structures	15	12.5
Restricted pathways for career advancement	15	12.5
Concerns about technology-driven job loss	15	12.5
Lack of staff	15	12.5
Employment instability	14	15

The findings revealed that multitasking during peak hours and dealing with aggressive or disrespectful customers were among the leading causes of stress among hospitality professionals. These findings highlighted the emotionally demanding and service-intensive nature of hospitality work.

The results strongly support Hochschild's (1983) Emotional Labor Theory, which explains that employees in customer-service professions are often required to regulate and manage emotions despite stressful interactions. Hospitality employees are expected to remain calm, courteous, and professional even when dealing with difficult customers or emotionally exhausting situations.

Grandey (2000) further explained that prolonged emotional regulation may lead to emotional exhaustion, burnout, and psychological stress among customer-contact employees. In hospitality settings, emotional labor becomes especially demanding because employees are continuously expected to display positive emotions while suppressing frustration, stress, or fatigue.

The findings are also consistent with the Transactional Stress Theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which explains that stress occurs when employees perceive workplace demands as exceeding their coping capacities. Hospitality professionals often encounter unpredictable situations such as guest complaints, operational delays, staff shortages, and peak-hour workloads, all of which may intensify stress experiences.

Previous hospitality studies likewise support the findings of this study. Brotheridge and Lee (2003) identified emotional labor and customer incivility as major predictors of stress and burnout among service employees. Karatepe and Uludag (2008) also reported that excessive workload and demanding customer interactions significantly contribute to occupational stress among hotel employees.

More recent studies further reinforce these findings. Karatepe et al. (2021) emphasized that customer aggression and emotional exhaustion remain among the strongest predictors of psychological strain in hospitality organizations. Similarly, Farmania et al. (2022) explained that hospitality employees continue to experience increasing emotional demands because customers now expect faster and more personalized services.

In addition, research conducted by Chen and Eyoun (2021) found that post-pandemic hospitality operations increased stress levels due to heightened customer expectations, staffing shortages, and increased emotional labor. This suggests that the hospitality industry continues to face evolving operational stressors that intensify employee strain.

The findings of this study therefore suggest that stress among hospitality professionals is primarily operational and interaction-based rather than organizational or structural in nature. Hospitality employees appear to experience greater stress from daily customer interactions, workload pressure,

and multitasking responsibilities than from concerns regarding job security or organizational changes.

➤ *How Stress Affects the Work Performance of Hospitality Professionals*

The findings clearly demonstrate that stress negatively affects various aspects of work performance, including service quality, workplace motivation, productivity, interpersonal relationships, and turnover intentions. These results indicated that occupational stress is not only an employee concern but also an important organizational issue that directly affects hospitality service outcomes.

The findings support the study of Babakus et al. (2009), which explained that employee stress reduces attentiveness, patience, and emotional regulation during customer interactions, thereby lowering service quality and customer satisfaction. Karatepe (2011) similarly found that emotionally exhausted hospitality employees often experience reduced work engagement and declining service performance.

The findings can also be explained using Self-Determination Theory developed by Deci and Ryan (2000), which suggested that excessive stress weakens intrinsic motivation by limiting employees' feelings of competence, autonomy, and psychological well-being. Hospitality employees who experience constant workload pressure and emotional fatigue may gradually lose enthusiasm and engagement toward work responsibilities.

Furthermore, the findings align with the work of Spector and Jex (1998), who noted that occupational stress contributes to workplace irritability, strained coworker relationships, and communication breakdown. In hospitality operations where teamwork is essential, stress-related interpersonal conflicts may significantly disrupt service coordination and organizational efficiency.

The findings regarding turnover intentions are likewise supported by Kim, Leong, and Lee (2005), who emphasized that stress and burnout are major predictors of employee attrition within hospitality organizations. Karatepe and Aleshinloye (2009) similarly found that employees experiencing prolonged stress are more likely to consider leaving their organizations or the hospitality industry entirely.

Recent literature further strengthens these findings. Koc and Boz (2023) explained that prolonged occupational stress negatively affects employee productivity, psychological well-being, and organizational commitment in hospitality establishments. Likewise, Chiang et al. (2022) reported that stressed hospitality employees often experience reduced concentration, lower work efficiency, and declining motivation, ultimately affecting customer satisfaction and organizational performance.

Additionally, Mahmoud et al. (2021) found that stress-related exhaustion among hospitality workers increased absenteeism, service errors, and employee disengagement,

particularly during high-demand operational periods. These findings reinforce the present study's conclusion that unmanaged occupational stress may significantly reduce workplace productivity and service quality.

Overall, the findings indicate that stress negatively influences both employee well-being and organizational performance. Without effective stress management strategies, hospitality organizations may experience declining employee performance, poor service quality, and increased workforce turnover.

➤ *Activities Implemented to Lessen the Stress of the Hospitality Professionals in Their Work Performance*

Table 4 Activities Implemented to Lessen the Stress of the Hospitality Professionals in Their Work Place

Activities	Frequency	Rank
Adopting shift rotations	33	1
Observing time-off policies	26	2
Team building sessions	23	3
Compressing workweeks	20	4
Skill building opportunities	17	5.5
Transparent promotion system	17	5.5
Providing clear career pathway	16	7
Holding training on conflict management	12	8
Peer mentoring	11	9
Presence of counselling services	10	10
Conduct of mental health awareness campaigns	7	11

The findings revealed that hospitality organizations commonly implement operational and scheduling-based stress management activities such as shift rotations, time-off policies, and team-building activities. These interventions are intended to reduce fatigue, improve work-life balance, and strengthen teamwork among employees.

The findings support Bakker et al. (2014), who emphasized that organizational resources such as social support, adequate recovery opportunities, and workload management help reduce occupational stress and improve employee resilience. Cohen and Wills (1985) also explained that social support functions as a protective factor that helps employees cope with workplace stress more effectively.

The findings likewise align with Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources Theory (1989), which explains that employees experience less stress when organizations provide sufficient emotional, social, and operational support resources. Hospitality employees who receive support from management and coworkers are more likely to cope effectively with workplace demands.

Recent studies further support the importance of organizational support systems. Ferreira et al. (2021) found that flexible scheduling practices and supportive workplace environments significantly improve employee well-being and reduce emotional exhaustion among hospitality

employees. Similarly, Choi et al. (2022) emphasized that work-life balance initiatives and supportive leadership practices help reduce stress and improve employee retention in hospitality establishments.

However, the findings revealed that counseling services and mental health awareness programs were among the least implemented interventions. This suggests that hospitality organizations continue to prioritize operational solutions over psychological and emotional support initiatives.

The findings support Hobfoll et al. (2018), who argued that many organizations still underutilize mental health programs because of stigma, insufficient awareness, and limited organizational resources. Recent studies by Jung et al. (2023) also reported that mental health support systems remain limited in many hospitality organizations despite increasing awareness regarding employee psychological well-being.

Furthermore, Wang and Wong (2022) emphasized that hospitality organizations should adopt more holistic stress management approaches that include mental health counseling, wellness programs, emotional resilience training, and psychological support systems.

Overall, the findings indicate that current hospitality stress management practices remain largely operational rather than holistic. Although scheduling adjustments and team-oriented activities are commonly implemented, organizations still need to strengthen emotional and psychological support programs for employees.

➤ *Proposed Preventive Intervention Strategies to Lessen Stress and Improve Work Performance*

Based on the findings of the study, effective intervention strategies must address both organizational job demands and employee well-being. Since workload pressure, multitasking, and emotional labor were identified as major stressors, hospitality organizations should prioritize improving staffing adequacy, workload distribution, and scheduling practices.

These findings strongly support the JD–R Model of Bakker and Demerouti (2007), which emphasized that increasing organizational resources may help reduce the negative effects of excessive job demands. Adequate staffing support during peak operational hours may help minimize multitasking pressure and reduce employee fatigue.

The literature also strongly supports integrated stress management programs that combine organizational initiatives and individual coping strategies (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001). These interventions may include structured break systems, peer mentoring, wellness activities, stress awareness seminars, counseling services, and employee recognition programs.

Recent hospitality research further supports the implementation of comprehensive employee wellness initiatives. Kim and Stepchenkova (2021) explained that organizations that invest in employee mental health programs experience improved employee engagement, higher productivity, and reduced turnover intentions. Likewise, Zopiatis et al. (2022) emphasized that emotional resilience training and supportive leadership practices significantly improve employee well-being in hospitality workplaces.

Recent studies additionally recommend the integration of mental health awareness campaigns and digital wellness support systems within hospitality organizations. According to Buhalis and Sinarta (2019), modern hospitality organizations increasingly recognize that employee well-being directly influences customer satisfaction, organizational sustainability, and service excellence.

Moreover, Farmaki (2023) emphasized that post-pandemic hospitality workplaces should adopt employee-centered management practices that prioritize psychological safety, work-life balance, and emotional support systems to maintain workforce stability and service quality.

Overall, the findings suggest that hospitality organizations should adopt more preventive, comprehensive, and employee-centered stress management strategies. By

improving workplace support systems and employee well-being programs, organizations may enhance productivity, service quality, employee retention, and long-term organizational sustainability.

IV. FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ *Findings*

- The stress level among hospitality professionals was generally interpreted as moderate under the Demands (Workload, Work Patterns, and Emotional Labor) dimension, with an overall composite mean of 3.13. Among the work groupings, Front Desk Personnel obtained the highest average mean of 3.36, verbally interpreted as moderate, indicating that they experience greater work-related stress brought about by direct guest interactions, multitasking, and operational demands. Food and Beverage Personnel obtained an average mean of 3.09, also interpreted as Moderate, suggesting that they experience stress associated with busy service operations and customer-related responsibilities. Meanwhile, Housekeeping Staff obtained the lowest average mean of 2.94, likewise interpreted as Moderate, indicating that although they experience workload pressures, their stress level is comparatively lower than those of Front Desk and Food and Beverage personnel.

The indicator “My job requires multitasking beyond my comfort level” obtained the highest overall mean of 3.94, verbally interpreted as high, indicating that multitasking is the most prominent stressor experienced by hospitality professionals. This was followed by “I often feel overwhelmed by the number of tasks I must complete during my shift,” which obtained an overall mean of 3.68, also interpreted as high, suggesting that excessive workload contributes substantially to employee stress. Other indicators such as mental exhaustion after workdays (3.45), skipping breaks due to workload demands (3.06), and stress from dealing with difficult customers (3.06) were interpreted as moderate, indicating that these factors also contribute to workplace stress.

Meanwhile, the Role (Clarity and Consistency of Responsibilities) dimension obtained an overall average mean of 2.45, verbally interpreted as low, indicating that role ambiguity, conflicting instructions, and unclear responsibilities were less frequently experienced by the respondents. Similarly, the Support and Relationships (Colleague, Supervisor, and Organizational Support) dimension obtained an overall average mean of 2.51, also interpreted as low, suggesting that issues concerning workplace support and interpersonal relationships contributed less to employee stress compared to workload-related demands.

- The perceived causes of stress among hospitality professionals were primarily associated with operational demands, emotional pressure, and customer-related interactions within the workplace. The leading stressors

identified were being expected to multitask during peak hours and encountering customers with aggressive behavior, both obtaining a frequency of 22 and ranked 1.5. Frequent change of shifts and schedule ranked third with a frequency of 20, while engaging with disrespectful customers and exposure to culturally diverse guest interactions both obtained a frequency of 19 and ranked 4.5.

In contrast, the least perceived cause of stress was employment instability, which obtained a frequency of 14 and ranked 15. Other lower-ranked stressors included reorganization of management structures, restricted pathways for career advancement, concerns about technology-driven job loss, and lack of staff, all with a frequency of 15 and rank 12. The findings indicate that hospitality professionals experience greater stress from daily operational demands and emotional labor rather than from long-term organizational concerns.

- Stress affects the work performance of hospitality professionals in various ways. Based on the qualitative themes that emerged from the responses, five major effects of stress were identified.
- ✓ Theme 1: Poor Service Delivery. Stress affects employees' ability to provide attentive, patient, and consistent service, thereby reducing the quality of service delivered to guests.
- ✓ Theme 2: Reduced Workplace Motivation. Continuous workload pressure, time constraints, and emotional demands contribute to lower employee enthusiasm, engagement, and commitment to work.
- ✓ Theme 3: Increased Interpersonal Conflicts. Stress heightens irritability and communication difficulties, leading to misunderstandings and strained relationships among employees and supervisors.
- ✓ Theme 4: Intensified Turnover Intentions. Prolonged exposure to stressful work conditions encourages employees to consider leaving their current jobs in search of less demanding work environments.
- ✓ Theme 5: Declining Employee Productivity. Stress contributes to fatigue, reduced concentration, and difficulty prioritizing tasks, resulting in lower work efficiency and productivity, particularly during peak operations.
- The activities implemented to lessen the stress of hospitality professionals primarily involve work scheduling, workload management, and organizational support. The most commonly implemented activity was adopting shift rotations, which obtained a frequency of 33 and ranked first. This was followed by observing time-off policies with a frequency of 26 and rank 2, and conducting team-building sessions with a frequency of 23 and rank 3. These findings suggest that hospitality organizations mainly rely on scheduling adjustments and teamwork-oriented activities to help employees manage stress and maintain work performance.

Other activities implemented in the workplace include compressing workweeks, which obtained a frequency of 20 and ranked fourth. Skill-building opportunities and transparent promotion systems both obtained a frequency of 17 and shared rank 5.5. Providing clear career pathways obtained a frequency of 16 and ranked seventh, while holding training on conflict management and peer mentoring obtained frequencies of 12 and 11 and ranked eighth and ninth, respectively. These findings indicate that organizations also support employee development and workplace relationships as part of their stress management practices.

Meanwhile, formal mental health support activities were less frequently implemented. The presence of counseling services obtained a frequency of 10 and ranked tenth, while the conduct of mental health awareness campaigns obtained the lowest frequency of 7 and ranked eleventh. The findings suggest that although hospitality organizations commonly implement operational and organizational approaches to stress reduction, formal mental health support programs remain limited. Hospitality organizations primarily rely on scheduling adjustments, workload management, and teamwork-oriented activities, while hospitality professionals likewise utilize personal coping practices that contribute to improved emotional well-being and work performance.

- Based on the findings of the study, a Preventive Stress Management Intervention for Hospitality Professionals is proposed to help reduce occupational stress and improve employee well-being and work performance within hospitality establishments.

➤ Conclusions

- Hospitality professionals experience a moderate level of stress, indicating the presence of continuous work-related pressures associated with hospitality operations. These stressors contribute to employee strain and may affect work performance when experienced continuously.
- Stress among hospitality professionals is primarily associated with workload pressure, multitasking, emotional labor, customer-related interactions, and time constraints, reflecting the demanding nature of hospitality service work.
- Occupational stress affects employee work performance by reducing service quality, lowering workplace motivation, increasing interpersonal conflicts, encouraging turnover intentions, and decreasing productivity.
- Hospitality organizations implement several stress-reducing activities such as shift rotation, time-off policies, and team-building activities. Mental health-related interventions remain limited, indicating the need for more structured, preventive, and employee-centered stress management programs.
- Preventive stress management interventions play an important role in reducing occupational stress among hospitality professionals by promoting employee well-

being, emotional support, workload balance, and organizational effectiveness.

➤ Recommendations

- Conduct regular stress assessments among hospitality professionals to identify early signs of stress and prevent its escalation in the workplace.
- Improve workload distribution, scheduling practices, and emotional support systems in the workplace to address key stressors experienced by hospitality professionals.
- Strengthen stress management initiatives to reduce the effects of stress on service delivery, workplace motivation, and employee productivity.
- Enhance existing stress-reduction activities by integrating preventive and employee-centered approaches that focus on employee well-being and workplace support.
- Adopt and implement the proposed preventive stress management intervention to foster a healthier, more supportive, and high-performing workforce.

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