Behind Closed Doors: Unravelling Job Stress and Satisfaction in Hotel Housekeeping

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Abstract: This study investigated the factors contributing to job-related stress among hotel housekeepers and explored their influence on both job stress and job satisfaction within this specific occupational context. A conceptual model was empirically tested using sample data of 550 hotel housekeeping employees. The study revealed that high job stress resulted in low job satisfaction levels among hotel housekeeping staff. Furthermore, performance pressure, role ambiguity, and workload antecedents were found to be the main reasons behind job stress. However, the study determined that the correlation between work-life balance and job stress was statistically insignificant. The study offers valuable insights to stakeholders for improving employee well-being and organisational effectiveness. This includes organisational interventions targeting job stressors, training on stress management, support services like counselling, and fostering a positive workplace culture, which are essential for enhancing job satisfaction among hotel housekeepers.

Keywords: performance pressure, role ambiguity, work-life balance, workload, job stress, job satisfaction, housekeeping staff

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Introduction

Over recent decades, significant shifts in work have occurred across various industrial sectors (Burman & Goswami, 2018; Hoboubi et al., 2017). In contemporary organisations, the management of employee job stress (STR) has emerged as a crucial workplace concern (Ford, 2023). According to the American Institute of Stress, STR incurs an annual cost exceeding $300 billion for employers in the United States. This significant expense results from various factors such as absenteeism, turnover, reduced productivity, as well as direct expenditures on medical care, legal matters, and insurance(Heckman, 2022). Work-related stress emerges when the requirements of a job are not in harmony with the abilities, resources, or requirements of employeesresulting in negative physical and emotional responses (Ahmad & Kashif, 2022). Scholars widely acknowledge that workplace factors are key contributors to STR, encompassing both physical and psychosocial hazards (Kabito et al, 2020). Physical hazards in the workplace can evoke anxiety, thereby exacerbating STR, while psychosocial hazards, such as aspects of work design, organisational structure, and management practices, also exert detrimental effects on individuals (Oakman, 2022).

The STR exerts a significant influence on both individual employees and organisational dynamics, profoundly affecting various aspects. It impacts the behavioural patterns, physiological responses, and psychological states of individuals within the workforce. Furthermore, it extends its reach to influence overall performance levels, the degree of STF, and the level of commitment individuals have towards the organisation they work for(Sirois et al., 2023). Notably, STR effect on STF is multifaceted. While moderate levels of stress can stimulate creativity and satisfaction by alleviating monotony, excessive stress can lead to aggression and diminished STF. STF, in turn, acts as a regulatory factor for stress, with historical theories suggesting a direct relationship between satisfaction and productivity (George & Dimitrios, 2008). Consequently, managing both STR and STF is crucial for enhancing workforce productivity and mitigating additional costs to companies.

The hospitality industry, characterised by its labour-intensive nature and reliance on human resources, faces unique challenges in managing STR(Yousaf et al., 2020; Khuong & Linh, 2020). Factors such as emotional labour, high seasonality, subcontracting practices, and demanding working hours contribute to elevated levels of STR and turnover rates within the industry (Bae, 2023; Chen et al., 2022). Despite these challenges, effective human resource management remains essential for hospitality organisations to achieve their objectives in an increasingly competitive and volatile market (Aboramadan& Karatepe, 2021; Ghani et al., 2022).

While previous research has explored STR and its impact on STF across various sectors, including banking (Kurniawaty et al., 2019); health care (Adamopoulos et al., 2022; Lo et al., 2018); Education (Chitra, 2020; Anees et al., 2021; Travers & Cooper, 2018); Shipping (Yuen et al., 2018), telecommunication (Naseem, 2018), Oil and gas (Hoboubi et al., 2017) and information technology (Prasad et al., 2020) sectors, limited attention has been given to hospitality industry. Moreover, identifying the antecedents of STR related to hospitality industry is also subject of interest. Given the hospitality industry's significant contribution to national GDP, revenue generation, and employment, understanding and mitigating job stressors is imperative for sustaining growth and fostering employee well-being (Andrade et al.,2021; khuong& Linh, 2020).

Hence, it is imperative for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to comprehend the factors leading to job stress in order to address them effectively and enhance job satisfaction. Building upon the preceding discourse, the current study establishes the following objectives:

- To identify the antecedents of STR related to hotelhousekeeping staff.
- To examine the impact of these antecedents on STR experienced by hotel housekeeping staff.
- To examine the impact of STR experienced by hotel housekeeping staff ontheir STF.

The subsequent sections are organised as follows: Section two offers an overview of the existing literature, while sections three and four explore the conceptual model and research methodology, respectively. Section five presents the analysis of results,

followed by section six, which outlines hypotheses testing. Section seven is dedicated to discussion, while section eight summarises the conclusions drawn from the study. Section nine addresses the implications of the current research. The final section, section ten, discusses the study's limitations and suggests avenues for future research.

Literature review

Previous literature has investigated several antecedents of work-related stress (STR), including performance pressure (PP) as studied by O'Neill and Davis (2011), role ambiguity (RA) as researched by Raub et al. (2021), work-life balance (WLB) as explored by Kim et al. (2023), and workload (WKL) as examined by Harini andKartiwi (2018) and Rescalvo-Martin et al. (2022). However, these studies often examined these factors in isolation. Therefore, the current study aims to collectively recognise these antecedents and understand their combined impact on STR, subsequently influencing job satisfaction (STF).

Performance pressure

As its name implies, performance pressure (PP) focuses on attaining elevated performance standards and emerges from various workplace elements, including incentives, penalties, and competitive environments (Zhang et al., 2017).Performance pressure (PP) functions as an external force compelling employees to deliver superior outcomes (Gardner, 2012), based on the belief that high performance leads to significant consequences (Mitchell et al., 2018), while also serving to deter individuals from experiencing negative repercussions.It's a double-edged sword, motivating employees to excel but also increasing stress and deviant behaviour (Mitchell et al., 2019; Ness et al., 2017). The perception of pressure determines outcomes, with threats leading to stress and negative outcomes like job dissatisfaction (Casper & Sonnentag, 2019; Quratulain &Khan, 2015). In the hospitality sector, Klungseth and Blakstad (2016) argue it is crucial to explore PPand its outcomes. Building on the preceding discussion, the present study posits that:

H1: The PP positively impacts the STR experienced by housekeeping employees.

Role ambiguity

RA, characterised by uncertainty about role expectations within an organisation (Rizzo et al., 1970) significantly impacts work stress (Amiruddin, 2019). When employees lack clarity on their responsibilities and performance evaluation, it heightens stress levels and fosters confusion and anxiety (Rizwan et al., 2014). This ambiguity also hampers career advancement and personal development opportunities (Awan et al., 2021; Vanishree, 2014), reducing job satisfaction (Harter et al., 2002; Kawai & Mohr, 2015). Moreover, it impairs decision-making and collaboration, leading to inefficiencies and reduced productivity. RA is linked to decreased affective engagement, negatively affecting employee wellbeing (Mañas et al., 2018). Therefore, understanding its impact on housekeepers' job stress is crucial. Hence, it is hyothesised that:

H2: The RA positively impacts the STR experienced by housekeeping employees.

Work-life balance

According to Sirgy and Lee (2018), WLB is defined as the active involvement in various roles within both work and non-work life, while striving to minimize conflict between them.Effective WLB practices reduce work-life conflict. Additionally, when employees can manage their work responsibilities alongside personal pursuits, it reduces job stress by providing time for relaxation and rejuvenation. This balance fosters higher job satisfaction, as employees feel valued and experience greater well-being (Eberman et al., 2019). Moreover, maintaining WLB enhances productivity and performance, as refreshed employees are more focused and motivated. Organisations benefit from reduced turnover and absenteeism when they support WLB, leading to a positive work environment and improved overall outcomes (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Deery, 2008). Cvenkel (2021) suggested that the implementation of flexible work arrangements and wellness initiatives will promotes WLB through which both employees and employers will get benefit.Based on the literature review and its relevance to the present study, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: The WLB positively impacts the STR experienced by housekeeping employees.

Workload

Tarwaka (2015) definedrole ambiguity as the disparity between workers' capacity and the demands of their jobs. The prevalence of heavy WKL and resulting stress appears to be increasing, affecting employees across various industries (Basit and Hassan, 2018; Stimec& Grima, 2019). Excessive WKL can lead to stress, with individuals facing overwhelming tasks and pressure to meet deadlines, potentially leading to burnout (Mansour & Tremblay, 2016; Quinn & Grant, 2022; Tentama et al., 2019). Unclear role expectations exacerbated by high WKL further contribute to stress levels and can lead to various health issues (Kanayo, 2017; Kirana et al., 2021). Conversely, manageable WKL promotes a sense of achievement, fosters WLB, and enhances job satisfaction by granting employees autonomy and control (Yeo et al., 2014). Building on this premise, the present study hypothesises:

H4: The WKL positively impacts the STR experienced byhousekeeping employees.

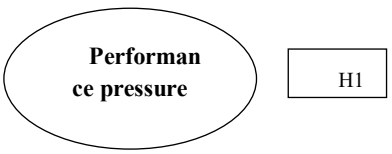
Job stress and job satisfaction

Employee job stress pertains to the strain experienced when managing work responsibilities, often resulting in various symptoms such as emotional instability, unease, social isolation, sleep disturbances, restlessness, anxiety, tension, nervousness, elevated blood pressure, and digestive issues (Mangkunegara, 2017). Conversely, job satisfaction encompasses the positive emotions that drive employees within their work environment, including factors like salary, opportunities for career advancement, relationships with colleagues, as well as personal attributes such as age, health, education, and skills (Mangkunegara, 2017). Despite their apparent disparities, these constructs are intertwined, with heightened job stress frequently leading to diminished job satisfaction (Hoboubi et al., 2017; Khuong & Linh, 2020; Tentama et al., 2019). Hence, the present study hypothesises that:

*H5***:** *The STRnegatively impacts the STFamong housekeeping employees.*

Conceptual model

The present study presents the following research model (see figure 1):



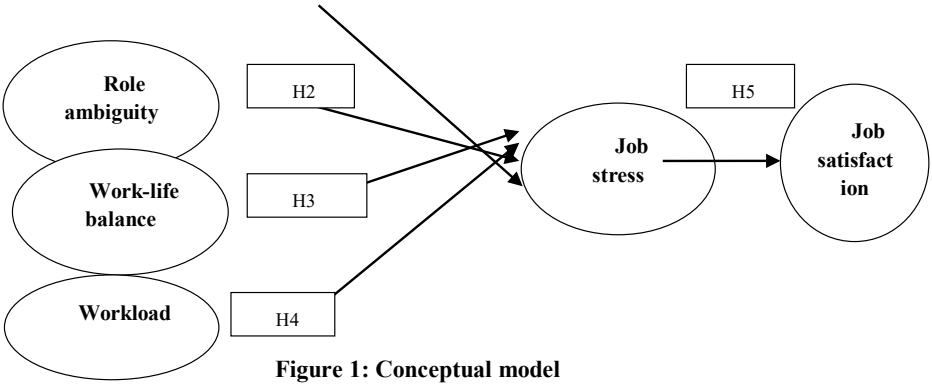


Figure 1: Conceptual model

Method

To achieve the study's objectives, a self-administered survey employing a five-point Likert scale was meticulously crafted. Drawing from established research by Junaidi et al. (2020), Huang & Wang (2019) and Vashdi et al. (2021) the scales for PP, RA, WLB, and WKL were adapted, each consisting of six questions. Additionally, scales for job stress and satisfaction, comprising ten questions each, were integrated to gauge employees' perceptions of their current job.

Purposive sampling was intentionally employed for this research to select the housekeeping employees who possess relevant experiences and insights into job stress and satisfaction within the hospitality industry. This approach not only provides the researcher a window to educate the respondents about the questionnaire but also allows targeted recruitment of participants who may be hesitant to express themselves openly, ensuring a focused and representative sample. By handpicking participants, researchers can establish trust and rapport, facilitating the collection of rich and insightful data from individuals intimately familiar with the challenges of their work environment.

Furthermore, the questionnaire was disseminated to 621 hotel housekeeping employees across various hotels in Delhi NCR, resulting in 550 completed responses. Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Version 26, with multiple regression employed to explore the associations between variables. This comprehensive

methodology ensured a robust examination of the factors influencing job stress and satisfaction among hotel housekeeping employees in the region.

Results

Descriptive evaluation

The socio-demographic breakdown of the sample group, comprising 550 individuals employed in housekeeping roles across a 5-star hotel group, showcases a diverse representation across various variables. Among the employees, females significantly dominate the workforce, constituting 60.2%, while males make up 39.8%. Educational backgrounds vary, with the highest proportion holding graduate degrees (25.84%), followed closely by senior secondary education (37.42%). Postgraduate and doctoral degree holders represent 16.48% and 20.26% of the sample, respectively, indicating a well-educated workforce. In terms of income, the majority of employees fall within the 3.6lacs-4.8lacs bracket (33.8%), reflecting a range of salary levels within the organisation. Additionally, 44.4% of employees earn below 2.4lacs annually. Age-wise, individuals aged 28-38 form the largest segment of the workforce at 49.82%, followed by those aged 18-28 (32.36%), with individuals above 38 years comprising the remaining 17.82%. This descriptive analysis offers significant understanding of the demographic makeup of housekeeping employees within the 5-star hotel group, highlighting the diversity and distribution across gender, education, income, and age categories. Furthermore, Table 1 outlines the constitution of the sample set.

Table 1:Sample statistics

Socio-demographic (N=550)	Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	219	39.8
	Female	331	60.2

Education	Sr secondary	168	37.42
	Graduate	116	25.84
	Postgraduate	74	16.48
	Doctorate	91	20.26
Annual income	Below2.4lacs	199	44.4
	2.4lacs-3.6lacs	98	21.8
	3.6lacs-4.8lacs	152	33.8
	Above 4.8lacs		
Age	18- 28	178	32.36
	28 -38	274	49.82
	Above 38	98	17.82

Establishing EFA assumptions

EFA was conducted to explore the inter-correlations among variables and identify underlying factors influencing each variable's nature. The analysis involved assessing communalities to understand the shared variance between observed variables and extracted factors. Utilising Varimax and Principal Component Analysis (PCA), the data was condensed into statistically independent components, with factor loading values exceeding 0.7 in the Rotated Component Matrix (RCM)(Table 2). This process allowed for the identification of four components, including PP, RA, WLB, WKL, STR, and STF, providing valuable insights into the underlying dimensions within the dataset.

Table 2:Assumptions for EFA

Conditions of EFA	**Criteria**	**Reference** (Suhr, 2006)	**Assumptions**
Sample size is 550	*n>200*	(Glenn d Israel, 2003)	Met
Barlett'ssphericity test yields a statistically significant result	$p <$ 0.001	(Tobias & Carlson, 1969)	Met

The KMO coefficient of 0.892 attests to the adequacy of the sample	> 0.70	(Liu & Wang, 2021)	Met
Satisfactory communalities values	> 0.50	(Hadi et al., 2016)	Met
Totalvariance explainedis80.689%	> 50%	(Howe, 1999)	Met
The variance for thefirstfactoris 15.719%	< 50%	(Howe, 1999)	Met

Rotated component matrix

Upon inspecting the RCM, one can identify the portrayal of each component. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) is utilised to segregate data into statistically independent components by discerning eigenvectors and eigenvalues. Notably, all factor loading values in the RCM exceed 0.7 (Hair, et al., 2016). As a result, the data has been consolidated into four components, specifically PP, RA, WLB, WKL, STR, and STF (refer to Table 3)

Table 3 Rotated component matrix

Rotated component matrix[a]						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
PP1			0.852			
PP2			0.865			
PP3			0.864			
RA1				0.		

				849		
RA2				0.899		
RA3				0.872		
WLB1					0.822	
WLB2					0.821	
WLB3					0.834	
WKL1						0.81
WKL2						0.841
WKL3						0.831
STR1	0.819					
STR2	0.848					
STR3	0.84					
STR4	0.778					
STF1		0.804				
STF2		0.839				
STF3		0.8				

		34				
STF4		0.667				
Cumulative variance extract (%)	15.719	30.325	43.41	56.35	68.703	80.689
Extraction method: Principal component analysis.						
Rotation method: Varimax with kaiser normalization.						
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.						

Model verification through confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Before proceeding with path analysis, it is essential to conduct CFA to validate the frameworks convergent validity (CV) and discriminant validity (DV). The data presented in Table 4 reveal strong support for the validity of the model. Each variable exhibits commendable composite reliability (CR) values, exceeding the suggested cutoff of 0.7 (Purwanto, 2021). Additionally, the average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed the suggested limit of 0.5, further verifying the model's CV (Figure 2). Furthermore, the Fornell-Lacker criteria was utilised to evaluate DV. As shown in Table 4, all DV are below the baseline value of 0.85, indicating adequate DV. These findings suggest that the variables in the model have lower correlations with other traits compared to the baseline threshold (Ab Hamid et al., 2017) thus demonstrating discriminant validity.

Table 4: Convergent validity

Constructs	**Items**	**Factor loading (> 0.5)**		**AVE (> 0.5)**	**MSV (< AVE)**
Performance pressure	PP1	0.905	0.928	0.928	0.338
	PP2	0.923			
	PP3	0.872			
Role ambiguity	RA1	0.802	0.911	0.911	0.231
	RA2	0.916			
	RA3	0.918			

Work-life balance	WLB 1	0.881	0.914	0.914	0.338
	WLB 2	0.909			
	WLB 3	0.859			
Workload	WKL 1	0.809	0.852	0.659	0.327
	WKL 2	0.847			
	WKL 3	0.777			
Jobstress	STR1	0.841	0.907	0.708	0.365
	STR2	0.872			
	STR3	0.861			
	STR4	0.79			
Job satisfaction	STF1	0.762	0.875	0.638	0.365
	STF2	0.862			
	STF3	0.862			
	STF4	0.696			

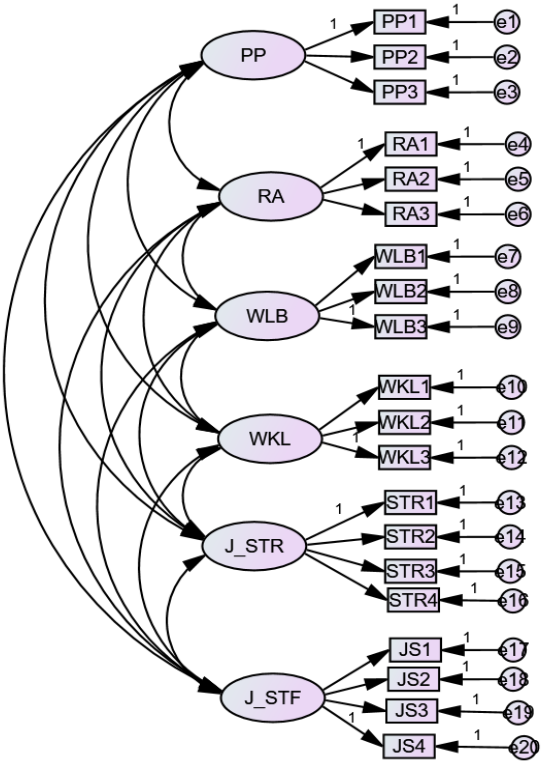
Discriminant validity analysis

Discriminant validity, coined by Campbell and Fiske (1959) assesses the uniqueness of a construct compared to others empirically. Cross-loading and HTMT ratio are employed to evaluate discriminant validity, with a factor loading threshold of 0.70. Additionally, the Fornell-Lacker criteria entail evaluating the comparison between the square root of the AVE and the interrelations among latent constructs. Findings in Table5 confirm discriminant validity, showing higher diagonal self-correlation than cross-correlation.

Table 5: Discriminant validity of the constructs

Constructs	WLB	STF	STR	PP	RA	WKL
Work-life balance	**0.883**					
Job satisfaction	-0.413	**0.799**				
Job stress	0.419	-0.604	**0.842**			
Performance pressure	0.581	-0.422	0.434	**0.9**		
Role ambiguity	0.481	-0.305	0.343	0.426	**0.88**	
Work load	0.572	-0.392	0.382	0.395	0.341	**0.812**

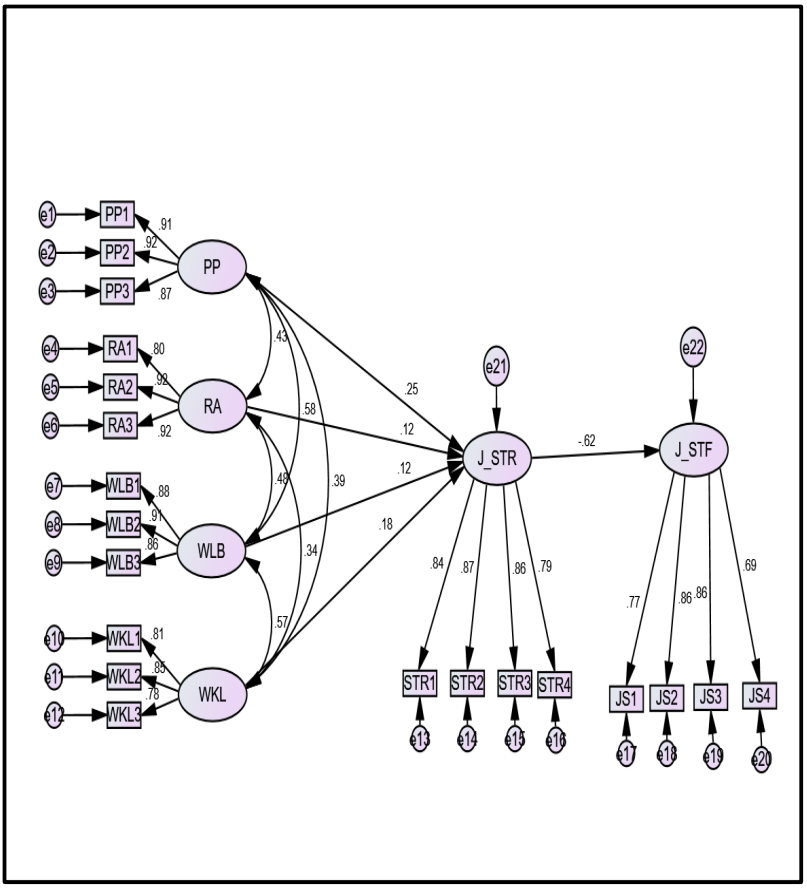
Figure 2-Standardised structural model



Estimation of the structural model

In this study, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to explore the hypothesised associations. To assess mediating effects, the bootstrapping method was applied using AMOS software. Both direct and indirect effects were examined, and significance was determined using two-tailed tests and bootstrap confidence intervals (Figure3). The analysis revealed statistically significant mediating relationships at the $p < 0.05$ level, indicating substantial influence of the proposed mediating variables on the relationships among different variables. Model fit indices demonstrated a satisfactory fit, with a CMIN/DF ratio of 2.842 and a CFI value of 0.963, indicating a high level of fit. The RMSEA value of 0.058 also fell within an acceptable range, further supporting the model's adequacy.

Figure 3-Standardised structural model



Hypothesis testing

The hypotheses were tested employing a significance threshold set at $\alpha = 0.05$ as shown in Table 6. Results indicate that H1, which posited a positive relationship between PPand STR of housekeeping employees, was accepted ($\beta = 0.252$, $p < 0.05$, $t = 4.745$), suggesting that higher PPcorresponds to increased STR among housekeeping staff, highlighting the importance of managing performance expectations effectively. Similarly, H2, proposing a positive relationship between RA and STR, was accepted ($\beta = 0.122$, $p < 0.05$, $t = 2.527$), indicating that unclear job responsibilities contribute to heightened STR among employees, emphasising the need for role clarification and effective communication within the workplace. However, H3, indicating a favourable correlation between WLB and STR, was rejected ($\beta = 0.121$, $p > 0.05$, $t = 1.938$), indicating that WLB may not be a significant predictor of STRamong housekeeping employees in this context, warranting further investigation into other factors influencing stress levels. H4, proposing a favourable association between WP and STR, was accepted ($\beta = 0.184$, $p < 0.05$, $t = 3.365$), highlighting the detrimental impact of heavy WKL on employee stress levels and underscoring the importance of WKL management strategies.

Table 6: Testing hypotheses

Hypothesis	Estimate	S. E	C.R	P	Remarks
H1	0.252	0.037	4.745	***	H1 Accepted
H2	0.122	0.05	2.527	0.011	H2 Accepted
H3	0.121	0.052	1.938	0.053	H3 Rejected
H4	0.184	0.061	3.365	***	H4 Accepted
H5	-0.617	0.049	-13.686	***	H5 Accepted

Conclusion

To conclude, this research investigated the correlation between various factors and STR among housekeeping staff members. Each hypothesis was individually tested and discussed in the context of existing research, providing valuable insights into the dynamics of stress in the workplace.

The findings revealed a significant positive association between PP and STR, highlighting the importance of addressing high performance expectations to mitigate stress levels. Similarly, the study supported a positive relationship between RA and STR, emphasising the need for clear communication and role clarification to alleviate stress among employees.

Although no notable correlation was observed between WLB and STR it is crucial for organisations to prioritise WLB initiatives to support employee well-being. Additionally, the study confirmed a positive relationship between WLP and STR, underscoring the importance of implementing WKL management strategies to reduce stress levels among employees.

Furthermore, the research revealed a substantial adverse correlation between STR and STF, highlighting the detrimental influence of stress on overall personnel satisfaction. To address this, organisations should invest in stress management interventions, promote open communication, and foster a supportive work environment to enhance employee morale and satisfaction.

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