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"How does job stress affect workers aged 25 to 45 in the service sector in Dublin?"

Acknowledgments

Abstract

The research sought to answer the question How does job stress affect workers aged 25 to 45 in the service sector in Dublin? This issue has drawn attention owing to high turnover rates caused by mental health concerns within the sector, a large contributor to the Irish economy. Exploring this age group provided insights into how young adults are coping with increasing stress levels in the urban service environment.

To respond to the question posed, a quantitative approach was adopted. A structured survey was sent out to service workers in Dublin to gather information on stressors, levels of control, job satisfaction, productivity, coping strategies, and the impact of Dublin-specific conditions. The analyses were triangulated with existing literature and theoretical frameworks such as Karasek's Demand-Control model and Lazarus's theory of stress.

Results indicated that most of the participants were experiencing at least moderate stress, with stressors identified primarily as workload, lack of recognition, and little support from management. Stress was found to correlate very well with job satisfaction and productivity, with many respondents taking time off or contemplating quitting. Flexibility and reward systems seemed to be quite effective as coping mechanisms; however, access to these has been limited. The study finds that job stress significantly reduces the mental well-being and performance of workers. Practical implications indicate that employers need to provide adequate forms of organised support.

The study also points to the necessity of local implementations of the global stress models. Future studies doing qualitative research or using an extensive age range are expected to garner much deeper insights.

1. Introduction.

Presently, occupational well-being and the stress radiating from work is one of the modern areas of research, particularly in interest in the service sector. This study investigates the experiences of occupational stress by Dublin service industry workers aged 25-45 years. This age bracket is very relevant in terms of career growth because most of the time, one tries to balance between professional and family or personal responsibilities. Stress has been the hallmark of this service sector that includes hospitality, restaurant, and retail, which are all well known to be high turnover, poor working conditions, and stress-prone by nature. It is most essential to learn what precisely constitutes workplace stress in that sector since actions are needed to further enhance the employees' wellbeing as well as the organisation's functionality (Barreto & Mayya, 2024).

1.1 Rationale for the Study

The service sector in Dublin is characterised as a stress-storming, fast-paced, demanding, and pulling environment where employees in Dublin are subjected to a high workload, emotional demands, and a lack of task control. It can result in enormous workloads of stress, which can affect well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and employee retention.

There has been emphasis on mental no surface area data, localised, empirical research on the subject for the effects of stress that specifically concern workers in the services of Dublin for ages 25 to 45, who have significant relevance at critical points in their careers.

This essay attempts to fill such a gap by trying to investigate the principal sources of workplace stress and their effects on individual performance and career decisions. The idea of such interrelations enables organisations to develop more sound stress management strategies and generally improve workplace conditions.

It is not just to serve, but also to add more academic value, since it is going to increase the small pool of literature on occupational stress and its effects through a deep, real-world case study in a European urban setting.

1.2 The central research question is

- How does work-related stress influence the well-being and job performance of service sector employees aged 25 to 45 in Dublin?

1.3 Statement of the research objectives

The overall aim of this study is to investigate the effect of work stress on employee performance, well-being, and career outcomes in the long term in the service sector in Dublin. Based on a review of research literature, the study proposes five broad themes with corresponding sub-research questions:

- To examine the main causes and emotional effects of workplace stress in Dublin's service sector, including its definition, contributing factors, and sector-specific challenges.
- To analyse the role of control, support, and theoretical stress models in understanding employee experiences in high-stress work environments.
- To evaluate the impact of workplace stress on job satisfaction and productivity, including employee motivation, absenteeism, and turnover intentions.
- To explore the availability, effectiveness, and perception of individual and organisational stress management strategies implemented in the service sector.

1.4 Information Gathering & Data Collection Technique Used

The research utilised quantitative methods via a structured survey to collect data from the employees aged between 25 to 45 years employed in the service sectors of Dublin. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended Likert-style questions to evaluate stress levels, job satisfaction, motivation, and perception of organisational support.

The survey will be distributed online through platforms like Google Forms to maintain anonymity and easy access. The data collected will be analysed via descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations.

1.5 Expected Outcomes of the study.

It will identify the main causes of stress at the workplace for service workers in Dublin and assess the effect of these causes on employee satisfaction, motivation, and retention. The study further aims to assess if the stress management strategies in practice are useful as perceived by the employees.

The outcome anticipated will aim to offer actionable insights into HR practice and employer strategies. While this intention is to generalise, various probability outcomes may emerge,

revealing certain contrary or nuanced outcomes, such as differing by gender, job role, or company size.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This review investigates job stress and how it affects employee well-being and productivity in the service sector within Dublin. Job stress has been extensively discussed in previous research, for example, Ganster and Rosen's (2013) definition, which describes job stress as a process through which pressures at work (stressors) lead to alterations in both short- and long-term health outcomes. By this review, several theories explaining the causes and effects of job stress, like Karasek's (1979) Job Demands-Control (JDC) model, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) transactional stress model, and Bakker and Demerouti (2007) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, are discussed. Each of the models provides a different point of view on how job demands and the resources available have an impact on the experience of stress and performance among employees.

This literature review is aimed at indicating the critical factors bringing about job stress in the service sector, together with stress management strategies available to employees and employers. Organizational structure, work conditions, and employee emotions will also be key parts of the study, as evidenced by Suifan et al. (2017), to be important ingredients of job satisfaction and mental health. Despite much research in this area, though, knowledge gaps remain in understanding how some of the factors in the work environment in Dublin affect job stress, hence the basis of the need for this study.

Different ways of conceptualizing and measuring job stress are discussed in the review, comparing the approaches used by different authors. Gaps in the literature have been identified, especially on the application of stress theories into practice in certain sectors, like services in Dublin. This analysis, too, shall guide the primary research, raising key questions such as: How do working conditions in the service sector affect employee stress levels? What are the most relevant factors contributing to well-being and productivity in this environment? These questions will be answered to form the design and approach for the primary study,

therefore creating a ground for formulating more effective strategies for managing workplace stress

2.2 Job Stress: Definition and Key Contributing Factors

Stress reactions at work cannot be considered an isolated phenomenon, as employees constantly experience and feel stress (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003). According to Daniel C. Ganster and Christopher C. Rosen (2013), job stress is the process by which psychological experiences and pressures at work (stressors) give rise to both short-term (strains) and long-term (physical and mental health) alterations. (Ganster & Rosen, 2013).

Dr. Hans Selye, a pioneer in stress research, first documented the stress encounter fifty years ago. He believed that stress was the body's general response to all demands placed on it (Jehangir, et al., 2011). According to Suifan et al. (2016) occupational stress is typically caused by an imbalance between an individual's strengths and the demands of their job.

There are three ways to conceptualize stress: (a) as a characteristic of the outside world that influences the person, (b) as the person's behavioural, physiological, and psychological reactions to environmental demands, threats, and challenges, or (c) as the combination of the two points of view (Ganster & Perrewé, 2011; Kahn & Byosiere, 1992). "Psychological strain or distress resulting from exposure to unusual or demanding situations, known as stressors" is another definition of stress (Finney, et al., 2013).

Since moods and emotions affect people's emotional and cognitive states, they also directly affect their level of pleasure (Uzonna, 2013). Furthermore, workers who are overworked are reluctant to report to work because they believe they are not putting enough time, energy, or effort into their tasks; in fact, productive relationships with coworkers at work units are important for the well-being of both employees and the organization (Suifan et al., 2017; Lai et al., 2015). Accordingly, working conditions can be either stressful or fulfilling depending on organizational structure and atmosphere (Lai et al., 2015). Recent research shows people feel happier and more energetic when their moods and emotions are good. On the other hand, when these are negative, workers feel stressed, depressed, and emotionally exhausted, which is linked to discontent in the workplace (Zito, et al., 2018). Similarly Samrong (2018) said numerous pressures at work cause physical discomfort, anxiety, sleep disturbances, and lower productivity (Samrong, 2018)

2.3 **Theoretical Approaches to Occupational Stress**

2.3.1 Karasek's (1979) job demands-control model

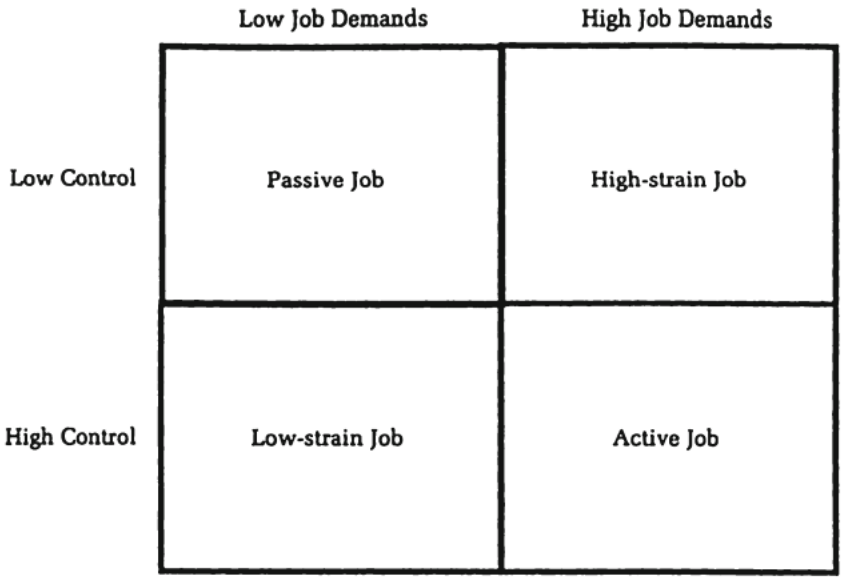


Figure 1. (Karasek, 1979)

One of the most extensively researched models of occupational stress is Karasek's (1979) work demands-control model (Lange, et al., 2003). Although Karasek also used the word "discretion" as a synonym for control, his original idea is known as the Job Demands–Control (JDC) Model. According to his theory, high job demands or pressures—both physical and psychosocial—can affect stress levels, particularly psychological strain. Still, they are not the leading causes of strain experiences alone. Instead, whether people have any influence over the obligations they must meet will impact how much stress they endure at work (Karasek, 1979). However, most research on the relationship between job demands and control has been inconsistent (de Lange et al., 2003; Van Der Deof & Maes, 1999). The primary reasons for this inconsistency are that demands, control, and strain have been measured using different variables, that there hasn't been enough longitudinal research, and that the model doesn't account for the unique characteristics of each worker (Doef & Maes, 1999).

2.3.2 Lazarus and Folkman's Stress Model (1984)

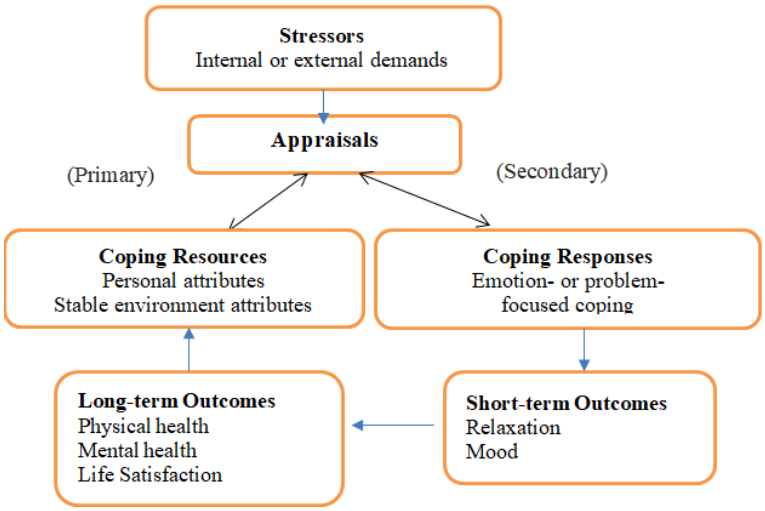


Figure 2. (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

One of the most influential theories for comprehending the process of psychosocial stress is the transactional model of stress, which was put out by Lazarus and Folkman's Stress Model (1984). It is referred to as "transactional" because it contends that stress arises from the interaction between the environment and the individual rather than from either alone (Ganster & Perrewé, 2011).This model's applicability in the context of stress is supported by its thorough understanding of emotions, including how they work and how to regulate them. The method highlights the continuous connection between individuals and their surroundings by emphasizing how emotional assessments affect stress reactions and coping strategies (Martin & Daniels, 2014),

The model describes two fundamental processes: primary and secondary appraisal. Through these, people analyse information about possible stresses and how well they can handle them cognitively. These cognitive evaluations trigger Stress-related physiological processes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). However, it has occasionally been contested that all environmental stresses only function through cognitive assessments. For instance, Zajonc (1984) maintained that emotional and physiological reactions might be triggered without cognitive mediation.

2.3.3 Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007)

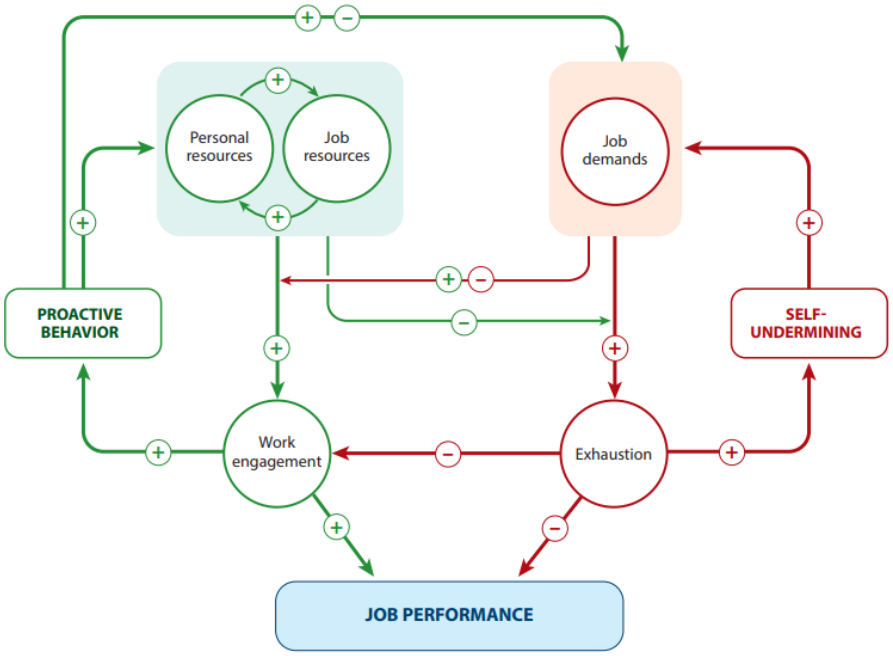


Figure 3. (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007)

To explain how demands and resources in the workplace affect employee performance and well-being, job demands and resources (JD-R) theory integrates many viewpoints on stress and work motivation. Workplace demands, including workload or emotional demands, are organizational, social, psychological, or physical elements that need prolonged effort and have corresponding psychological or physiological consequences. However, employment resources—like autonomy or social support—help people reach their goals, control the effects of demands, and foster personal growth (Demerouti et al., 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Using these components, the model also examines how workers manage their needs and resources using proactive and reactive tactics (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Van Veldhoven et al., 2020).

The flexibility of JD-R theory makes it possible to incorporate a variety of job characteristics and synthesize information from earlier models, including the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, et al., 2018), the job characteristics theory (Hackman & Oldham, 1976), and the demand-control theory (Karasek, 1979). In contrast to more constrained methods, JD-R

enables the examination of how various demands and resources impact work engagement and burnout, tailoring to the unique characteristics of each profession. For instance, software engineers and scientists have more cognitive demands than nurses and police officers, even though emotional needs are as important to these professionals (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001).

2.4 The Impact of job Stress on Job Satisfaction

According to Rose (2003), work satisfaction is the main factor impacted by stress, and it exists at all organizational levels. A reward stimulus determines job happiness. According to Priya and Eshwar (2014), a reward is whatever an employee receives—such as pay, benefits, promotions, etc.—in exchange for their efforts and services to the company. Dissatisfaction frequently results from a lack of these cues in the workplace. (Priya & Eshwar, 2014)

Research indicates that having a suitable incentive system in place is crucial for an organization since it significantly impacts employee satisfaction (Markova & Ford, 2011; Wei & Yazdanifard, 2014). Employees may be inspired to improve their performance to obtain more enormous incentives (Sajuyigbe et al. 2013) as it fosters pleasant thoughts and emotions that make them feel valued and appreciated for their work (Chiang & Birtch, 2011).

An increasing amount of research suggests that the present trends in employment circumstances may negatively impact job satisfaction and worsen employees' physical and mental health (Faragher, et al., 2005). Positive and negative affectivity are the two components of affective disposition on job satisfaction. Positive affectivity is characterized by high energy, enthusiasm, and joyful engagement, whereas negative affectivity is characterized by discomfort, unpleasant involvement, and anxiousness (Judge & Larsen, 2001).

2.5 The Impact of job Stress on Productivity

Stress at work harms output by encouraging discontent, low motivation, absenteeism, and attrition. Productivity is typically assessed as production per worker hour. However, this metric frequently ignores more general organizational objectives, such as cutting inventory or operating expenses, as claimed by Chase and Aquilano (Chase & Aquilano, 1995). Mathis and Jackson (2000) stress that uncontrolled stress upsets the delicate balance between the

amount and quality of labour and resource expenditures. Long-term stress also leads to counterproductive actions when individual capacity does not meet environmental needs (Thompson & McHugh, 1995).

Blumenthal (2003) characterized the link between stress and production as an inverted U-curve. While extreme stress leads to poor performance and negative health effects, moderate stress can increase productivity by boosting energy and attention. This emphasizes stress management's importance in avoiding burnout and preserving worker well-being. Effective therapies, such as cognitive-behavioural techniques and flexible work schedules, can match personal skills with workplace requirements and lessen the negative effects of ongoing stress (Steers, 1991; Blumenthal, 2003).

Employers have a moral duty to provide a healthy workplace because of the connection between job pressures and worker well-being (Patterson, et al., 1997). Numerous studies have sought to show the connection between stresses, well-being, and productivity since Wright et al.'s (1993) study. However, most use small and targeted samples and concentrate on occupational burnout rather than overall psychological well-being (Wright, et al., 1993). According to quasi-experimental research by Munz, Kohler, and Greenberg (2001), participants (n=55) in a stress reduction program performed better on the job than those in a control group (n=24). Despite confirming the connection between productivity, stress, and well-being, the program's benefits may impact the outcomes (Munz, et al., 2001).

2.6 Stress Management Strategies

The capacity to remain in control when circumstances, people, and events place undue demands on oneself is known as stress management. The key to stress management is taking control of an employee's thoughts, feelings, schedule, surroundings, and problem-solving style (Mendagudli, et al., 2021). Sustaining employee well-being and productivity requires effective stress management. Cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) is among the most proven stress-reducing methods. It helps people adapt to challenges by addressing negative thinking patterns and enhancing coping skills. Studies show that CBT works especially well when combined with relaxation methods that support resilience and psychological equilibrium in high-stress situations, such as progressive muscle relaxation and mindfulness (Blumenthal, 2003; Paudel et al., 2022).

Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that integrated Stress Management Training (SMT) programs—which incorporate time management, relaxation, and conflict resolution—avoid and control stress. By promoting healthy coping strategies and self-evaluation, these programs build resilience and lower the risk of burnout. They are helpful for firms looking to reduce stress since meta-analyses have shown how they may improve workplace settings and individual wellbeing (Porter & Lawler, 1968; Paudel et al., 2022).

2.7 Stress in service sector jobs in Dublin

The foundation of contemporary economies is the service sector, which includes a range of industries like business services, healthcare, education, finance, and tourism (Daniels, 2012; Eichengreen & Gupta, 2011). It contributes significantly to GDP and jobs worldwide in developed and developing countries. Due to technology improvements, the sector—characterized by its labour-intensive nature and dependence on client interaction—has adapted to global economic trends and provided cross-border services like banking and e-commerce. These services provide jobs for people with different skill levels and support economic globalization (Dudė, et al., 2021; The World Bank Group, 2021).

By linking businesses to global value chains, innovative services are crucial for improving industrial competitiveness and creating jobs in emerging nations (Gonzales, et al., 2012). Established and emerging countries benefit from expanding trade in business services, such as professional, financial, and ICT services (Javalgi, et al., 2004). According to the Gonzales, et al (2012) business services, for instance, makeup 25% of employment in the US and 20% and 15% of jobs in the UK and France, respectively. In addition to offering crucial services that close gaps across industries and geographical boundaries, the service sector's dynamic and changing character highlights its essential role in influencing future labour markets and economic policies (Lahiri & Kedia, 2011).

Temporary service providers have become more prevalent, particularly in the hotel industry, due to public sector cost-cutting measures and multinational corporations. The present state of Dublin's service industry has been dramatically influenced by this tendency, with Temporary Service Providers (TSSPs) being vital in various labour markets ((Nolan & Whelan, 2000); (Redmond, et al., 2007).

In 2023, employment in Irish-owned services increased by 2.5%, while in foreign-owned services, it fell by 1.7%. Business services remain key (Central Statistics Office, 2024; Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, 2024). However, workplace stress is rising globally, particularly in Ireland. In 2010, 8% of the workforce reported stress, which more than doubled to 17% in 2015 (Russell, et al., 2018). This increasing trend has led to numerous studies on stress in various occupations, such as social care, teaching, nursing, and academia. Russell et al. (2018) analysed key factors contributing to work-related stress in the UK and Ireland.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter states the methodological framework that was used for the study of work-related stress among employees in the service sectors in Dublin. The study is grounded on post-positivist philosophy with a deductive approach and depends on quantitative methods for the collection and processing of data. The aim was to collect measurable data related to stress prevalence and patterns through structured surveys. This provided the option of identifying trends statistically while retaining the ethicality, reliability, and validity of the concerned findings. The sections that follow explain the research paradigm, methodology justification, sampling techniques, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Theoretical Paradigm / Philosophy Employed

This research has used a deductive epistemological approach and a post-positivist ontological position. The researcher assumes that reality can be quantified and comprehended objectively through observable phenomena since the entire study is predicated on quantitative data collected through organised surveys. The questions would be closed-ended and based on secondary research and existing academic knowledge, suggesting trust in a single, quantifiable world (Romm, 2013). Still, research can attempt to formulate wide-ranging generalisations by adhering to rigorous empirical procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Therefore, the validity of the findings is attached to the number of respondents corroborating or contesting what the literature suggests, and not by the richness of narratives. In this context, a post-positivist model asserts that total objectivity may not exist.

3.3 Justification for the Adoption of Method

The research collects quantifiable information on stress among Dublin's service workers using a quantitative survey. Standardised replies and easier statistical analysis are made possible by structured surveys (Kelley, et al., 2003). When examining correlations between variables and testing ideas using numerical data is the goal, quantitative approaches work very well (Bryman, 2016). The requirement for objective, consistent data across a very large sample made this strategy appropriate.

This survey was segmented into six sections:

- Personal Demographic Data

Being a question on the age of working, the gender, the service sector, for instance, restaurant, hotel, pub, etc and years of working. Such questions would give one an idea of the different levels of stress in terms of personal and professional profiles.

- Theme 1: Job Stress Factors and Negative Emotions

Asks about the most common stressors and their frequencies, like anxiety, depression, and burnout. Most sources use them all, and they all have significant relationships with stress dimensions common in hospitality and service studies (Karatepe, 2013).

- Theme 2: Control and Resources in the Workplace

Also based on the job demand-control model of Karasek, this pattern evaluates the perceived autonomy of operational tasks and the adequacy of the employer-provided resources. Such control would be a key factor in coping with stress (Karasek & Theorell, 1990).

- Theme 3: Impact of Job Stress in Job Satisfaction

How stress is perceived to affect an employee's valuation by the employer and how the incentive can ever revitalise their emotional drain, creating motivation regarding Herzberg's hypothesised two-factor theory (Herzberg, 1959).

- Theme 4: Impact of Job Stress on Productivity

Time where an individual is motivated in stressful situations and whether the stress even made him take a sick leave or think of quitting were like research on burnout that studied how it had an impact on productivity (Maslach & Leiter, 2016).

- Theme 5: Strategies for stress control

Assessment of existing employer supports, such as flexible work schedules and accessibility to counselling, alongside employee participation in these programs according to the current best practices for occupational stress mitigation (EU-OSHA, 2020).

- Theme 6: Job stress experienced within the service sector in Dublin

Work-life balance and emotional burnout were two Dublin-specific challenges reflecting the national labour conditions and grounding it locally to the study (CSO Ireland, 2023).

3.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Due to time and access limitations, a non-probability convenience sampling approach was used. 56 people in all filled out the survey. Convenience sampling is often employed in exploratory research when the objective is to detect trends rather than anticipate behaviour across all situations, even if it is not generalizable to the full population (Etikan, et al., 2016).

3.5 Data Analysis Method

The data are analysed using descriptive statistics, with an emphasis on the use of percentages and frequency distributions. This allows for the identification of trends and relationships between categorical variables. Field (2013) stated that descriptive analysis clarifies important findings and is used to summarise survey data. Since open-ended responses were not collected for this study, qualitative data analysis techniques were not necessary.

3.5.1 Survey Structure and Implementation

The general survey design was to gather primary quantitative information in a structured fashion. Multiple-choice questions, Likert-scale questions, and some multiple-selection questions look at the various dimensions of work-related stress experienced by service workers in Dublin. The questionnaire consisted of six central themes: job stressors, locus of control and resources, job satisfaction and productivity, strategies for coping with stress, and stress specific to the service sector in Dublin.

The survey was an online questionnaire distributed through Microsoft Forms and was taken by 56 participants aged 25 to 45 years, working in restaurants, pubs, and hotels in Dublin. The period for collection allowed the participants time to respond wisely and in a non-intimidating environment. The sample consisted of people with various levels of experience and backgrounds, allowing a broader understanding of experiences within the service sector.

The responses elicited deep insight into the causes and effects of work-life stress, the adequacy of support offered by employers, and the general emotional climate within Dublin's service sector. The information obtained formed the very basis upon which the study intended to identify trends and assess the real influence of occupational stress on employees' well-being and performance.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

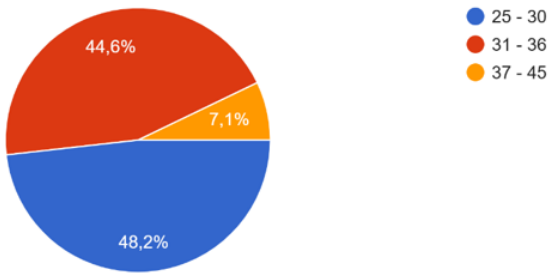
The research adhered to all ethical considerations such as informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality. Participants were provided with an information sheet in layperson's terms and the consent form. Protecting participants' rights and privacy is considered very important in social research, and personally identifiable data was not collected (Babbie, 2020)

Once again, valid and reliable questionnaires were assessed on the clarity and consistency of items and underwent pretesting and revision. In this respect, this study attempted to avoid bias and introduce neutrality by carefully phrasing questions and standardising them following recommendations made by (Saunders, et al., 2009).

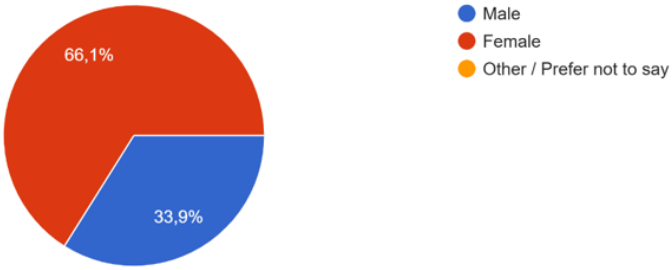
4. Finding and discussion

This findings and discussion section explores the results of a survey conducted to address the impact of work-related stress in Dublin's service sector on people aged 28 to 38. The majority of participants were aged 25 to 36 (48.2% were 25 to 30; 44.6% were 31 to 36). 66.1% identified as male. They were primarily classified into the following categories: 50% worked in restaurants, 32.1% in hotels, and 17.9% in bars. Most participants had been in the sector for less than three years.

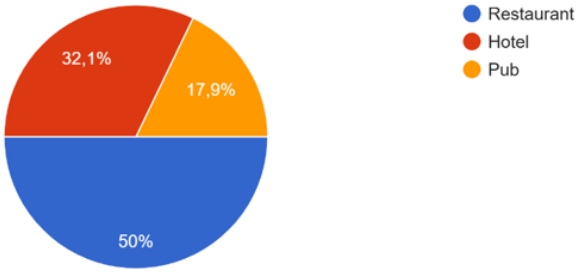
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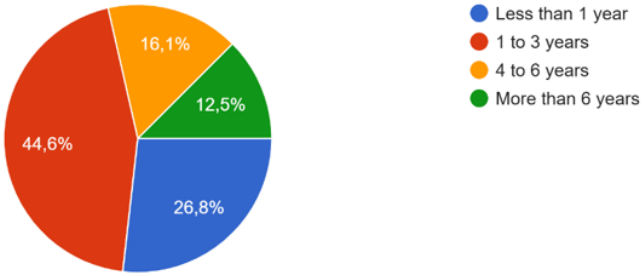
Gender:



Service sector area of work:

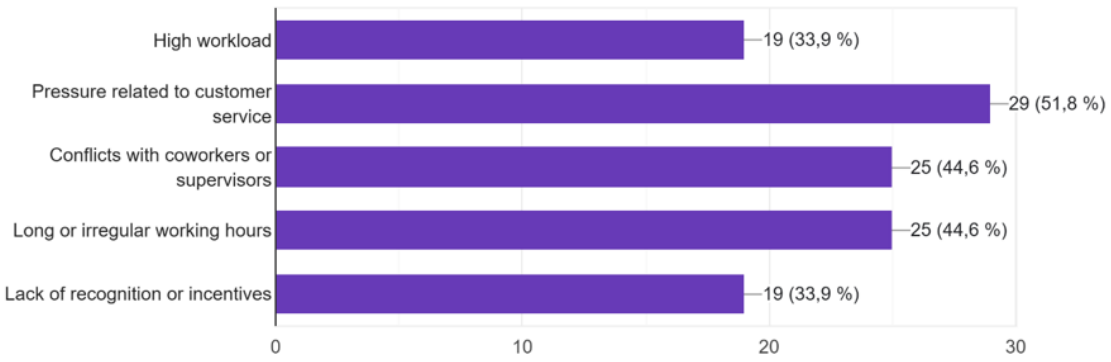


Years of experience in the service sector:

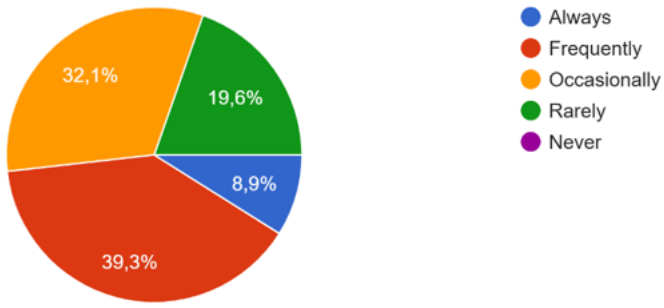


Theme 1: Job Stress: Definition and Key Contributing Factors

What specific situations at work cause you the most stress? *(You can select multiple options)*



How frequently do you experience negative emotions at work, such as anxiety or burnout?



Quantitative results evidence that the key stressors for Dublin service sector workers ages 25-45 include customer service pressure (51.8%); conflict with coworkers or supervisors (44.6%); and long or irregular hours (44.6%). Other contributing factors are workload (33.9%) and lack of recognition or incentives (33.9%). Additionally, 48.2% of respondents reported feeling negative emotions, like anxiety or burnout, often or all the time. Such findings imply that employees experience emotional and organisational demands that seriously impact their psychological well-being.

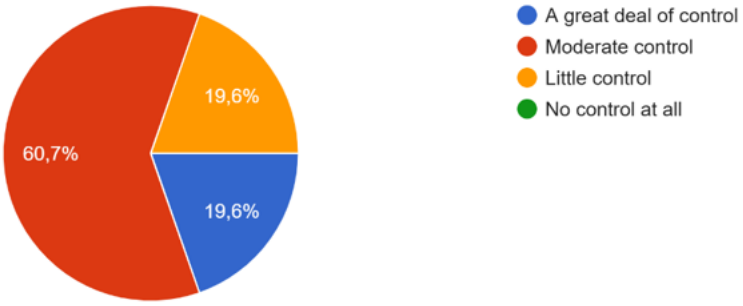
The findings are congruent with the literature reviewed. Job stress, as defined by Ganster and Rosen (2013), arises from pressure within the work environment requiring both psychological and physical change, and in this context, customer pressure and workplace conflict have been identified as two major stress triggers. Furthermore, Suifan et al. (2016) indicate that stress arises when there is an imbalance between the demands of the job and an individual's capabilities. This correlates with findings from the participants that they felt overloaded with work and lacked recognition for their efforts. Zito et al. (2018) and Samrong (2018) also contextualise how negative emotions such as anxiety and burnout affect job satisfaction, and the corroborating evidence for this is that none of the participants said they "never" feel anxiety or burnout at work.

Thus, these outcomes indicate that job stress within this group is not an individual phenomenon but rather a systemic reaction to a high-demand, high-affect work environment. This will answer the research question related to the impact of job stress in the service provision sector in Dublin and serves as a justification for organisations to recognise and address these stressors in a preventative approach. Such strategies can comprise, but are not

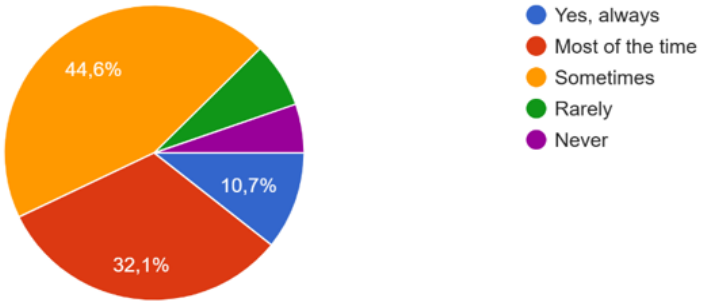
limited to, employee wellness initiatives, better shift organisation, and effective conflict resolution mechanisms to reduce tensions and increase satisfaction at work.

Theme 2: Control and Resources at Work (Theoretical Approach)

Do you feel you have enough control over your daily work tasks?



Do you feel your employer provides sufficient resources and support to meet your job demands?

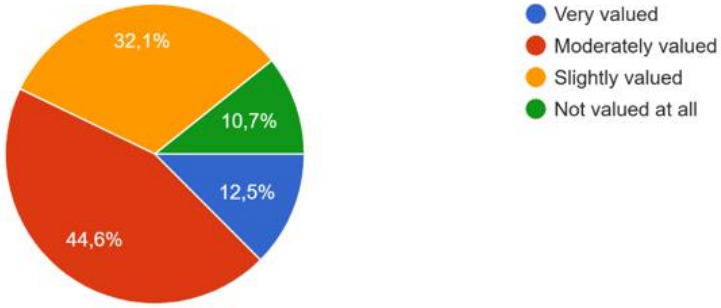


The results indicate that most people have a medium perception of control over their daily tasks (60.7%) or low control (19.6%), and only 19.6% of the sample state they have a high level of control over their daily tasks. Regarding support and resources, only 10.7% described their employers as supporting them all the time, while 32.1% felt that most of the time supported. However, the largest group (44.6%) reported that they "sometimes" receive the resources necessary to meet job demands; over 12% said they are rarely or never supported in this regard. These findings imply that a majority of workers feel less than entirely powerless, but a significant chunk still work in environments where autonomy and support are inconsistently present, and these two factors might combine and contribute to work-related stress and job dissatisfaction.

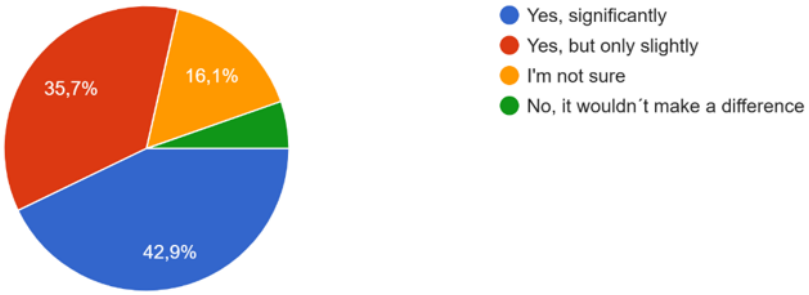
Such findings can be very closely related to the theoretical models discussed in the literature. According to Karasek's (1979) Job Demands-Control (JDC) model, the degree of control workers have over their tasks is in itself a major determinant of stress. The present research gives credence to this theory, whereby those with only moderate and lower levels of control perceive limited resource availability, thus suggesting that they find themselves in a group vulnerable for having exposure to high-stressors, but not enough coping mechanisms. The JD-R Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), on the other hand, emphasises the important role of job resources such as autonomy and support, with an emphasis that the lack of these increases the risk of burnout.

Theme 3: Impact of Job Stress on Job Satisfaction

When experiencing high levels of stress, how valued do you feel by your employer?



Do you think receiving incentives (monetary or non-monetary) would help reduce the impact of stress on your job satisfaction?



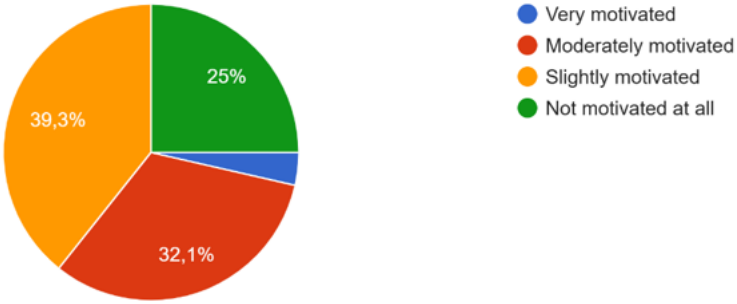
Survey results indicate that job stress very much affects the extent to which employees feel valued. While 44.6% of respondents claim to feel somewhat valued during periods of intense

stress, 32.1% feel only a little value, and 10.7%, not at all. A mere 12.5% confessed to feeling very valued. A study by Rose (2003) corroborated the survey finding, suggesting that stress leads to a decline in job satisfaction at every level of the organisation. Dissatisfaction mounts when there is a lack of reward or recognition (Priya & Eshwar, 2014).

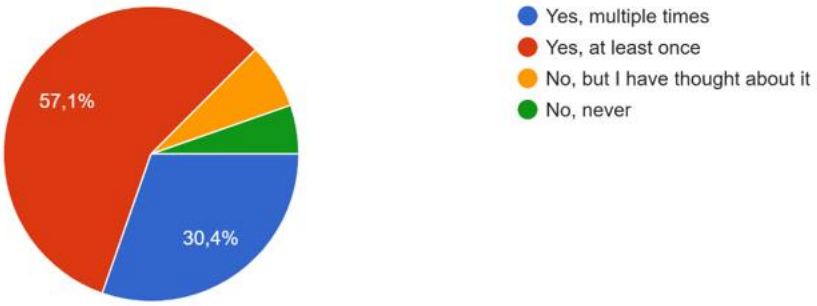
When asked to comment on the mitigating effect of rewards on the effect of stress on satisfaction, 42.9% of the respondents said that rewards would greatly lessen the effects of stress on their satisfaction, while 35.7% said it would lessen them somewhat. These findings support other studies, showing that reward systems enhance satisfaction and motivation (Markova & Ford, 2011; Sajuyigbe et al., 2013). Recognition builds positive feelings towards engagement (Chiang & Birtch, 2011).

Theme 4: Impact of Job Stress on Productivity

How motivated do you feel to perform your job tasks when experiencing stress?



Has job stress ever led you to take time off work or consider leaving your job?



The results' data strongly suggest a negative correlation between job stress and productivity. Only 3.6% of respondents who felt very stressed also felt very motivated at work. The majority

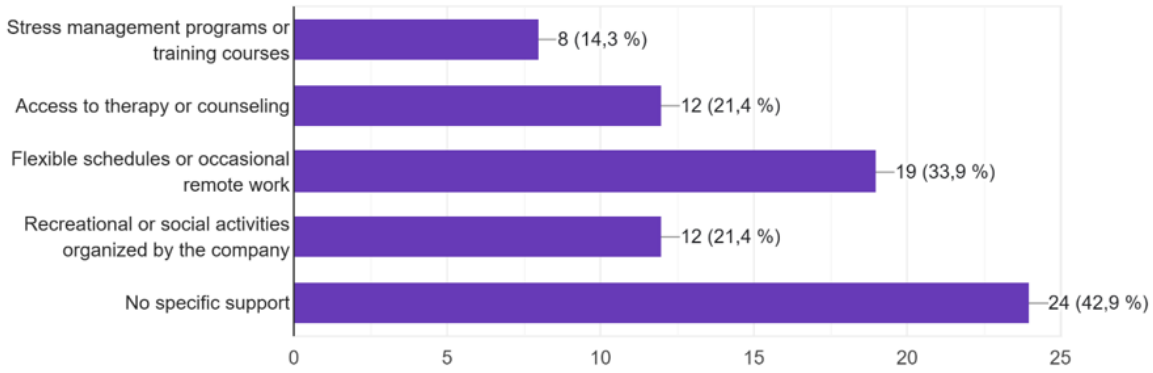
of the respondents felt somewhat motivated (39.3%) to not at all motivated (25%). Also, more than 87.5% of the respondents stated that they had either taken leave or contemplated leaving due to job stress. The findings corroborate Mathis and Jackson's (2000) research that unmanaged stress diminishes productivity while facilitating absenteeism and disengagement.

Blumenthal's (2003) inverted U-curve design indicates that while mild stress may facilitate performance, excessive stress impairs motivation and thus effectiveness. This study turns the focus on a sizeable proportion of workers who are demotivated, thereby maintaining that the levels of stress have crossed the positively beneficial threshold. This rather finds support from Munz et al. (2001), who found that stress management programs help improve performance.

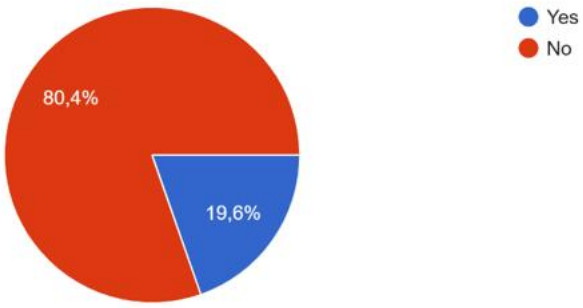
To summarise, job stress lowers motivation and increases turnover intentions, and this has catastrophic implications for productivity. Therefore, managing stress is especially important for the performance and retention of employees in the Dublin service sector by introducing measures such as flexible working hours and emotional support.

Theme 5: Stress Management Strategies

What kind of support does your employer offer to help manage job-related stress? *(You can select multiple options)*



Have you ever participated in any stress management programs or training provided by your employer?



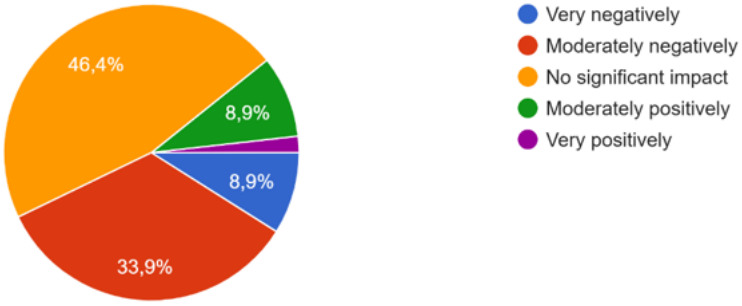
The answers to these questions indicate a wide gap between the employer aid and the occurrence of stress itself. Only a few (19.6%) respondents have ever availed of stress management programs, whereas the number of respondents reporting that their companies do not provide any form of special help went as high as 42.9%. The most common among the forms of assistance was flexible working arrangements, 33.9%, while the least used was leisure participation and counselling. It implies that most companies still have a scarcity of systematic and active treatments for stress.

Management of stress combines a great deal of being in control over one's thoughts, stands, and surroundings, as Mendagudli et al. (2021) state. Combined with Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Stress Management Training programs have been associated with lower levels of stress and higher resilience but given the percentage below 20 in terms of the participants enrolled in such programs, it may well reflect either less employer involvement or lower accessibility within the Dublin service sector.

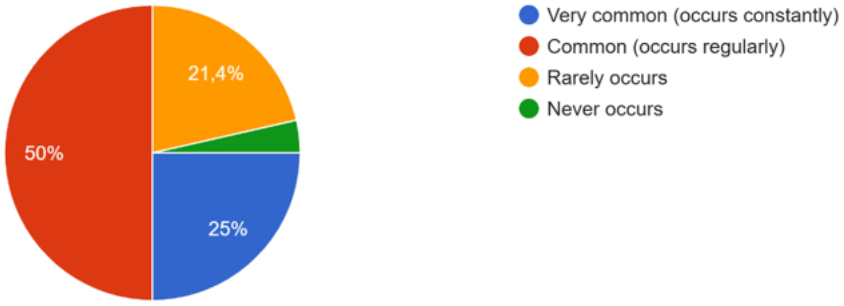
Showing evidence that, though the techniques say that management means better productivity and well-being, one may not find them in wide application, these findings would prove worth their weight in gold towards the establishment of organised SMT programs and a culture of normalising stress management and emotionally supportive workplaces.

Theme 6: Job Stress Specific to Dublin's Service Sector

How does the workload in Dublin's service sector impact your work-life balance?



How common is emotional burnout in your particular service-sector work environment in Dublin?



The data indicate that while nearly half of the respondents (46.4%) regard workload as having a small impact on their work-life balance, a whopping 42.8% indicated moderate to very negative effects of workload on their work-life balance. Emotional burnout seems to exist, with 75% of the respondents saying it is either "common" or "very common" in their workplace. This indicates that job stress remains an ongoing feature in the service sector of Dublin, albeit with variable impacts on work-life balance depending on the specific role or organisation.

Similar to the literature, the service sector occupies a substantial place in economic activity and is faced with many challenges due to its labour-intensive nature, specifically in a highly urbanised capital like Dublin. The rise of temporary service providers (Nolan & Whelan, 2000; Redmond et al., 2007) has interfered with job stability at the cost of increased stress. While

the sector has grown in economic validation (CSO, 2024), issues regarding the sector's stresses have skyrocketed, with national figures reflecting a steep increase in stress claims since 2010 (Russell, et al., 2018).

Therefore, while opportunities abound for Dublin service economics, stressors are now seen as realities. Stress, particularly emotional burnout, continues to be an issue in the wake of development and growth, making it imperative that there be support at the workplace and a shift, most drastically, to stable employment setups.

5. Conclusion

This study sought to assess the impact of job stress on workers between the ages of 28-38 in the service sector of Dublin by focusing on six themes: sources of stress, control and resources, job satisfaction, productivity, coping strategies, and stress factors unique to Dublin. Through a quantitative survey with triangulation with existing literature and theoretical models, the study attempted to provide a well-rounded view of how stress instantiates in this demographic and how it manifests into an impact.

The results indicate that job stress is prevalent and very potent. This study revealed that a vast majority of participants reported having moderate to high job stress, with stipulations relating to workload, lack of control, and limited access to employer support as the frequently cited causes. Consequently, stress seriously impaired their job satisfaction and productivity; 87.5% indicated that they did not feel "very valued" during stressful times. Stress directly impacted retention and mental health, as evidenced by 88% taking stress leave or considering leaving their jobs on account of stress.

The study facilitates the application of theoretical models such as Karasek's Demand-Control Model and Lazarus's Cognitive Appraisal Theory in the understanding of work-related stress and further contributes new insight by active consideration of a slight yet important age group in a predetermined urban labour context. The practical implications are quite clear, with recommendations that the Dublin service industry should be more systematic and proactive to lower stress and improve the welfare of its workers.

5.1 Limitations

- The limitation of the study design to the age range of 28 to 38 means that the findings may be less generalizable to other ages or service sectors.
- The use of self-reported surveys for collecting empirical data may have suffered from personal bias, either through misinterpretation or a tendency to avoid sensitive questions.

- This being a cross-sectional study does not track stress levels or coping outcomes across time frames; therefore, it lacks deep insight into the possible long-term effects/changes.
- The finding that 46.4% of respondents stated their work-life balance was "not significantly impacted" raises an eyebrow, considering the stress levels they had reported earlier. This may imply the presence of other factors or aspects, like effective coping, or even possible desensitisation, that are not adequately captured or explained in this study.

5.2 Recommendations

Several practical applications and future research proposals are drawn from the conclusion and limitations of this study:

For Employees and the Service Sector in Dublin:

- Establish structured systems for managing and addressing stress in the workplace by including continuous psychological support and counselling so that mental health is positively managed.
- Facilitate flexible scheduling that, when possible, allows for remote working to reduce time-based stressors and enhance an individual's work-life balance.
- Schedule recreation or social outings within the workplace to enable a better communal environment and improve relationships among employees.
- Design programs for incentives and recognition that make employees feel valued and supported. This may improve retention and motivation among employees.

For future research:

- Increasing sociodemographic diversity in future studies will allow programs to include a sufficiently broad range of respondents in a sample.
- Conduct a mixed-methods approach, with both in-depth (qualitative) and quantitative interview options, to obtain maximum information about lived experiences and coping strategies.

- Conduct longitudinal studies to show what changes in work-related stressors and their consequences might occur over time with the introduction of specific interventions or policy changes.

5.3 Reflexion

This thesis-writing experience has been fulfilling for me academically and personally. Research about workplace stress and its impact on service sector workers in Dublin allowed me to apply some of the training I had undergone, while ultimately being exposed to real-life conditions facing many young professionals. Through data analysis and theoretical review, I was able to isolate pertinent patterns and propose viable solutions. Thus, this renewed my interest in workplace well-being and bringing healthy working conditions into existence, considering the very demanding nature of the service sector. This further enhanced my research, critical analysis, and communication skills, which I intend to develop further in my future work and study related to work and organisations.

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