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The Impact of Occupational Stress on Employee Performance in Maldives Tourism Industry

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Abstract
This study was conducted to investigate the relationship between occupational stress on employee performance in the Maldives tourism industry. Descriptive research design was adopted for primary data collection. A questionnaire containing 24 items with Likert 5-point scale (1: strongly disagree – 5: strongly agree) was developed as the research instrument to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire was divided into three parts: the first part sought demographic characteristics; the second part sought responses on causes of stress (work overload, inadequate compensation, career concerns and interpersonal conflicts) as independent variables; The dependent variable was employee performance and part three of the questionnaire comprises factors to identify the impact of stress on the dependent variable. A total of 270 respondents were selected from various tourist resorts in the Maldives by employing convenience sampling technique. Regression techniques using SPSS26 were carried out to analyze and evaluate the impact of occupational stress on employee performance. The findings of the study showed that both work overload and inadequate compensation have significant negative impact on employee performance. The other two independent variables, career concerns and interpersonal conflicts found to have no significant impact on employee performance. Hence, it was concluded that increased workload and inadequate compensation escalates level of stress and significantly reduces employee performance. Therefore, it is recommended for managers not to increase employees' work demands in a way that exceeds the individual's ability to complete the assigned tasks. It is also imperative for managers to ensure that the employees' benefit package or compensation reflects the amount of effort they invest on work. This will help to reduce the level of stress and enhance employees' performance. Since there are limited/no past researches in the context of Maldives tourism industry, future research should be more structured and consider exploring different variables that contribute to stress and are not used in this research. This will help to draw a better understanding of the subject and would also facilitate to obtain an improved analytical result.

Key Terms: *Occupational Stress, Employee Performance, Work Overload, Inadequate Compensation, Career Concerns, Interpersonal Conflicts, Tourism Industry, Maldives.*

1.0 Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) classified stress as the "Health Epidemic of the 21st Century". Organizations need to give clear attention to occupational stress as it has un foreseen consequences on employees physical and psychological wellbeing (Asamoah & Aggrey, 2017). Several researches suggest job satisfaction, commitment and loyalty as key drivers of employee performance (Näswall, et al., 2015). However, it is of paramount importance to establish the impact of occupational stress on employee performance (Setar, et al., 2015). . Major factors that contribute to occupational stress include career concerns, work overload, poor work environments and low compensation (Bhushan, 2018). A study by Goonetilleke et al., (2018) stated that occupational stress leads to job dissatisfaction and have negative effects on employee performance. Quick & Henderson (2016) suggests that stress may lead to serious anomalies in workplace which negatively affect individual's wellbeing and productivity. It escalates several work-related issues such as job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, low commitment, reduced work performance and several physical ailments.

Occupational stress leads to negative consequences in the tourism sector. It affects employee performance, increase employee turnover and contribute to mental illnesses and physical injuries (Vijayan, 2018). According to Maldives Times (2017), there is an overwhelming discrimination, negligence of employee rights and recruitment of underqualified employees in the Maldivian tourism sector. In April 2019, employees from various tourist resorts protested over low wages (Maldives Independent, 2019) and in May employees protested over unpaid salaries (Zalif, 2019). In addition, there is no mechanism in place for employees to return to their family after work (Afaf, 2019). These types of stress related conditions lead to job insecurity, job dissatisfaction and lack of organizational performance (Asimah, 2018). A vast majority of the cases filed in employment tribunal are from hospitality employees where 90% of the cases relate to unfair dismissal and salary issues (Maldives Employment Tribunal, 2018). Major stressors like work overload, shift work, career concerns and low or delayed salaries have significant negative impact on job performance and intention to quit. Low salary, ill working conditions, occupational health issues, prevented annual leave, isolation from family and labor exploitation are some major issues faced by the Maldives tourism industry (IOM, 2018).

1.1 Research Aims

The aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between occupational stress on employee performance in Maldives hospitality industry.

1.1.1 Research Questions

i. What is the impact of workload on employee performance?

ii. What is the impact of inadequate compensation on employee performance?

iii. What is the impact of career concern on employee performance?

iv. What is the impact of interpersonal conflicts on employee performance?

1.1.2 Research Objectives

i. To evaluate the effect of workload on employee performance

ii. To evaluate the effect of inadequate compensation on employee performance

iii. To evaluate the effect of career concerns on employee performance

iv. To evaluate the effect of interpersonal conflicts on employee performance

1.2 Significance of Study

The Maldives adopts one island one resort concept where each resort is a single island separated by sea. There is no proper transport mechanism in place for the employees in these resorts to get back to their family after work (Afaf, 2019). A research by IOM (2018) illustrated that there are inconsistencies in issuing salaries, discrimination between employees and poor working environments, job security concerns and poor HR practices among workers in the Maldives. The increase in expatriates for lesser wages, discrimination over locals and diminishing job security is creating stress among workers in the industry leading to strikes in work environments (Maldives times 2017). While hundreds of resort workers quit their job due to low wages and nonpayment (Maldives independent 2015), the issue remained unresolved (RaajjeMV 2019). Researches have shown that these factors contribute to stress and can have negative impact on employees' performance (Low & McCraty, 2018). Hence, the above indicates the presence of major stressors in the tourism labor force in the country, the current study will investigate the relationship between occupational stress on employee performance in the Maldives tourism industry.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Key Terms

2.1.1 Stress

The World Health Organization (WHO) classified stress as the "Health Epidemic of the 21st Century". The term "stress" was invented by Hans Selye in 1936, defining it as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change". Krantz et al. (1985) defines stress as the change in a person's mental or physical state in reaction to circumstances or stressors that demand threat or challenge. Williams & Cooper (2002) describes

stress as reactions of employees when certain demands, pressure and other professional aspects, which employee face at work, do not tie with employee's knowledge, creating threats and challenges to individual's capabilities that can lead to struggle for existence in the workplace. Occupational stress is a complex psychological concept that can be defined as the change in a person's mental or physical state in response to a circumstance that appraise challenge or threat from the workplace to the employee (Colligan & Higgins, 2005). Aydin (2018) suggests occupational stress as psychological and physical pressure that emerges in an individual due to a mismatch of job demands and available resources. Furthermore, it is an ill fit between individual capabilities and the job environment where work demands on the individual are excessive and the individual is not well-equipped to comply the situation.

2.1.2 Employee Performance

Employee performance, also known as individual performance or job performance does not have a standard definition. However, as the term "performance" embraces multiple facets, a plethora of definitions exist. Hoppock (1957) describes employee performance as a record of results of a job practiced for a given period of time. . Borman & Motowidlo (1993) defines employee performance as a combination of financial and non-financial value gained by an employee that directly and indirectly contributes to the organizational goals and targets. According to Jex & Britt (2002) employee performance involves all behaviors an employee engages at work. It also refers to the work-related events and activities of an employee and how well those tasks were executed. Carlson (2017) stated that employee performance could be divided into task and contextual performance, where task performance accounts to behaviors that directly relates in producing goods and services and contextual performance contains behaviors that are not directly associated with the core tasks of the employees but helps to shape the social, psychological and organizational standpoint.

2.2 Empirical Studies

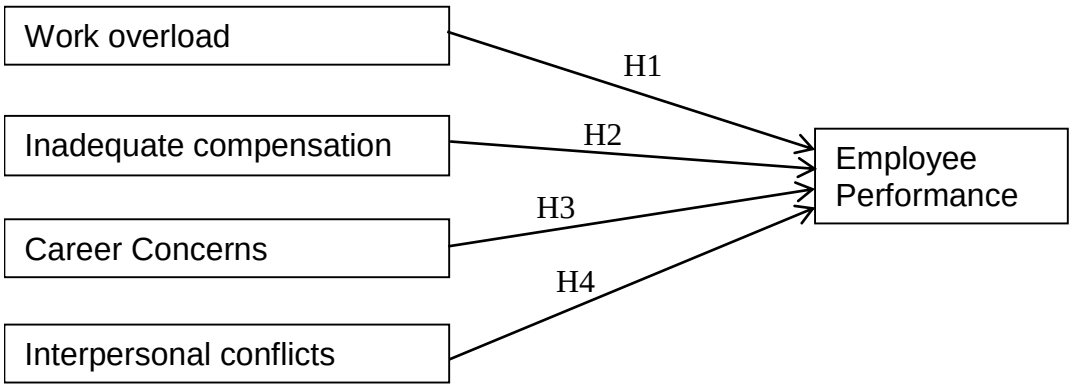
Mahiri & Orwa (2016) conducted a study to study the relationship between occupational stress and employee performance. The independent variable used in the study was interpersonal relationship (relationship with supervisors and colleagues). The dependent variable was employee performance. Descriptive research design was adopted in this study and used questionnaires to collect data. SPSSS was utilized to get results both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study showed that occupational stress influences work relationships in a negative manner. The findings also showed that bitter interpersonal relationships between employees also effect performance negatively. In addition, unhealthy relationship with supervisors and colleagues also has a negative effect on employees. The study also indicated that conflicts among employees is one of the main case of stress in the organization and that occupational stress is the main cause of conflicts between employees and supervisors, thus showing a connected link between interpersonal relationships and occupational stress. The study concludes with the impression working relationships has a positive relationship with employee performance. The researcher suggests to keep a positive working environment in order to mitigate occupational stress.

Murali, et al. (2017) conducted a research to investigate the impact of occupational stress on the performance of employees. The researchers used Likert Scale survey questionnaires to study the relationship between four independent variables; time pressure, lack of motivation, workload and role ambiguity and employee performance (dependent variable). The study was conducted with 310 responders from different sectors and industries. The survey was conducted via Facebook as a convenient sample technique to reach more participants. By using regression analysis, the researcher found out that role ambiguity and time pressure has a significant negative effect on employee performance. However, the findings showed that the other two variables, workload and lack of motivation do not have significant effect on employee performance. The research concludes with this finding and recommends organizations to pay more attention to role ambiguity and time pressure to ensure employee performance.

Vijayan (2018) investigated factors accelerating work-related stress and how it can affect on the performance of the employees. This study enriches the literature by investigating two hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 investigated relationship between three main work-related stressors (workload, job security and shift work) and six variables (gender, age, education, designation, marital status and income. Hypothesis 2 investigated relationship between the three stressors and employee performance. It also provided suggestions to both employers and employees on how to mitigate stress at work. No theory was tested in this study. A quantitative

approach and random sampling were adopted to a sample of 100 employees. Data was collected using questionnaires and the results were analyzed using descriptive to determine its main findings. Findings of hypothesis 1 showed that there is a significant difference between the variables and the stressors. Hypothesis 2 also showed that there is a significant interrelationship between the stressors and performance. It was concluded that male responders and married responders were more likely to be stressed by the constructs than the others and workload has more impact on employee performance in comparison with shift work and job security. Vijayan (2018), suggests employees to practice a healthy work-life balance and the management to conduct workshops and seminars to manage stress at work.

2.3 Conceptual Framework



2.3.1 There is a significant positive impact between work overload and employee performance

A study by Haq, et al. (2020) stated that when work demands exceed an individual's abilities to do the assigned tasks, it creates pressure leading to stress. When those conditions tend to persist without interruption, it creates various behavioral, physical and mental issues on the employee. It was evident that work overload leads to stress and both have significant negative impacts on an individual's overall productivity and interrupt the accomplishments of organizational goals. Another study by Alias, et al. (2019) using variables: work overload, role conflict and role ambiguity as determinants of stress found out that those variables significantly influenced to occupational stress and negatively impacted the employees' performance.

2.3.2 There is a significant positive impact between inadequate compensation and employee performance

Salary plays a key role in employees' job satisfaction and performance. A study by Bhui, et al. (2016) stated that, employees are likely to induce stress if they lack a decent benefit package or their salary does not reflect the amount of effort they invest in work. Occupational stress has negative impacts on employees physical and emotional well-being which also negatively effects their performance (Zhe Wang, 2017). Stress have significant negative impact on employee performance and a handsome pay is essential to overcome the effect of stress (Danish, et al., 2015).

2.3.3 There is a significant positive impact between career concerns and employee performance

Various factors are responsible for stress in the tourism industry and among them, career concerns is a major element that is responsible for high level of stress (Bhushan, 2018). A study by Vijayan (2018) revealed that career concerns such as job security significantly increases occupational stress which has strong negative impact on employees' performance. Asamoah & Aggrey (2017) found out that lack of career development and advancement opportunities significantly increases occupational stress. Khuong & Yen (2016) found out that lack of career development opportunities does not directly affect employee performance. However, it significantly increases occupational stress which has a strong negative impact on employee performance.

2.3.4 There is a significant positive impact between interpersonal conflicts and employee performance

Lack of interpersonal relations is one of the major causes of occupational stress that affect employees' performance (Asamoah & Aggrey, 2017). A study by (Mahiri & Orwa, 2016) found out that interpersonal conflicts within an organization negatively affects efficiency and productivity of employees. The study also found occupational stress as the main cause of most of the conflicts between employees and their superiors. Workplace conflicts are frequent precursors of several social issues such as aggression, violence and

sometimes contribute costly outcomes including turnover and depression (Wright, et al., 2017). Several studies have showed that occupational stress exhibit low morale and increased interpersonal conflict with coworkers and supervisors. Reducing interpersonal conflicts and other different aspects of stress found to have an increase in level of job satisfaction and employees' performance.

3.0 Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Type of Investigation

The current study is quantitative in nature and used descriptive research design to find out the relationship between stress causing factors and employee performance. The purpose of descriptive research is to describe, evaluate and validate the hypothesis or the objectives (Jalagat, 2017). Descriptive research design helps to determine the views, attitudes or behaviors heled by a group of people towards a given subject (Saunders, et al., 2019). Descriptive studies can be used to describe different aspects of a phenomenon and it describes the characteristics or behavior of a sample population (Saunders, et al., 2019). Descriptive designs are quantitative in nature and is commonly used in non-experimental studies where there is no manipulation of the variables by the researcher (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

Quantitative or the deductive approach is chosen for the current research. First hypotheses were developed based on existing theories and research literature. Data collection was done afterwards to test the hypotheses and based on those testing decisions to accept or reject the initial hypotheses was made. Large or small scale surveys using closed ended questionnaires are one of the most common methods employed by positivist researchers to collect quantitative data (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016). The numeric data collected through quantitative methods are analyzed using statistical approaches to determine answers for the research questions (Rehman & Alharthi, 2016).

3.2 Data Collection Sources

The current research is quantitative in nature and employed survey questionnaire method. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to collect primary data to evaluate the relationship between variables and no secondary data was used. Questionnaires are frequently used in reporting behaviors, expressing attitudes, reporting opinions, and determining future intentions or aspirations (Young, 2016). Questionnaires enable to collect quantitative data in a standardized manner ensuring internal consistency and coherence for analysis (Roopa & Rani, 2012). The study sought questionnaire method because it is relatively cheap compared with other data collection methods like interview, case study and observation methods. It is also enabling to reach a large population in a very short period of time as the researcher is not required to meet every respondent in person to collect their opinions. The research used closed ended questions with multiple choice options to collect demographic data. Responses to test on the variables were collected through closed ended scaled questions that were graded on a continuum. There are different types of rating scales to measure responses in a survey. However, most researchers use Likert scale to measure the responses in a survey research (Joshi, et al., 2015). Hence it is widely used, the research adopted Likert 5-point scale to collect responses.

3.3 Sampling Method

The target population was the employees of Maldives tourism industry. The population comprises full-time employees of all levels working in the industry. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed through focal points from various tourist resorts of the Maldives. It was also circulated through several social media groups including resort staff groups and friendship networks within the industry. The researcher stopped receiving responses from the participants when the number of respondents reached the determined sample size of 270 respondents.

For the purpose of this research non-probability convenience technique was employed. The most significant characteristics of convenience sampling is, the respondents from the target population meets certain criteria such as availability, reachability and willingness to participate (Etikan, et al., 2016). Convenience sampling is inexpensive technique and tends to overcome many shortcomings associated with the research (Taherdoost, 2016).

3.4 Questionnaire

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Survey Questionnaire

Privacy and confidentiality

This survey will not collect any personal information from the respondents. All the data collected will be kept confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for academic purposes only.

Voluntary participation

Do you understand the purpose and nature of this study and agree to voluntarily participate in this survey?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Part 1 – Demographic information

What is your age group?

Below 26 years ☐ 26-35 years ☐ 36-45 years ☐ 46 years and above ☐

What is your gender?

Female ☐ Male ☐

What is your monthly income range?

Below USD 500 ☐ USD 500 to 800 ☐ USD 801 to 1200 ☐

USD 1201 to 1500 ☐ USD 1501 & above ☐

What is your current position level?

Operational level ☐ Supervisory level ☐

Managerial level ☐ Senior managerial/Executive level ☐

How long have you been working in your current organization?

Less than 3 years ☐ Between 3 – 5 years ☐

Between 5 – 10 years ☐ Over 10 years ☐

What is your academic qualification?

Secondary/diploma ☐ Bachelor's degree ☐ Master's degree ☐ Doctorate ☐

Please mark the rating that most closely describes your overall opinion. 1 = Strongly disagree (SDA), 2 = Disagree (DA), 3 =Undecided (U), 4 = Agree (A), 5 = Strongly agree (SA).

Part 2 – Occupational Stress Dimensions					
Work overload	**SDA**	**DA**	**U**	**A**	**SA**
I am pressured to work long hours to complete my daily tasks	1	2	3	4	5
I have unachievable deadlines from my department	1	2	3	4	5
I tend to neglect some tasks because I have too much work to do	1	2	3	4	5
I am unable to take daily/weekly breaks and other entitled leaves due to work demands	1	2	3	4	5
Inadequate compensation					
My salary and rewards are insufficient in comparison to my workload and efforts	1	2	3	4	5
I don't receive overtime for extra hours/days I work	1	2	3	4	5
My compensation and rewards (e.g. service charge, bonus, salary) gets delayed	1	2	3	4	5
Incentives (e.g. pay raise, bonuses) offered by my organization are not appealing	1	2	3	4	5
Career concerns					
My organization do not offer adequate training for my development	1	2	3	4	5
My career has not progressed up to my expectations	1	2	3	4	5
My organization do not offer study leaves	1	2	3	4	5
If I were to advance my career, I have to leave my current organization	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal conflicts					
I am often treated unfairly at work	1	2	3	4	5
I'm been blamed or criticized for things that wasn't my fault	1	2	3	4	5
I'm been treated with hostility or rude behavior	1	2	3	4	5
I feel lack of respect towards me	1	2	3	4	5
Part 3 – Employee performance					
Task performance					
I find it difficult to finish the tasks on time	1	2	3	4	5
I struggle to give my hundred percent to tasks due to workload	1	2	3	4	5
It is difficult to give preference to important tasks as all my tasks had to be done on time	1	2	3	4	5

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Analysis of the Demographic Profile of Respondents

A sample of 270 respondents were used for the current study. As illustrated in **Error! Reference source not found.**, the respondents were segmented into five clusters: age group, gender, monthly income range, level in organization and academic qualification.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Age	Below 26 years	51	18.9	18.9
	26 - 35 years	125	46.3	65.2
	36 - 45 years	73	27.0	92.2
	Above 46 years	21	7.8	100.0
Gender	Female	31	11.5	11.5
	Male	239	88.5	100
Monthly Income	Below USD 500	94	34.8	34.8
	USD 501 - 800	56	20.7	55.6
	USD 801 - 1200	39	14.4	70.0
	USD 1201 - 1500	18	6.7	76.7
	Above USD 1500	63	23.3	100.0
Level in Organization	Operational level	129	47.8	47.8
	Supervisory level	66	24.4	72.2
	Managerial level	49	18.1	90.4
	Senior Managerial/Executive level	26	9.6	100.0
Academic Qualification	Secondary/Diploma	196	72.6	72.6
	Bachelor's degree	62	23.0	95.6
	Master's degree	12	4.4	100.0
	Total	270	100	

Table 1: Demographic Analysis

Error! Reference source not found. depicts that among the 270 respondents 88.5% were male and 11.5% were female. Gender representation in the sample were close to the statistics of NBS which estimated that about 10% of the resort workers are females (NBS, 2019). A majority of 92.2% were below 45 years of age and among them 65.2% were below 35 years representing youth dominance in the industry. From the income group distribution, it can be inferred that 34.8% were in the category of below USD 500 and 56.6% of the respondents claimed of receiving less than USD 800 as their monthly income. This indicates that the average salary in the industry is relatively low compared to the living costs in the country (Numbeo, 2020). According to Maldives Independent (2018) the average industry salary lies between 250-500 US dollars. It is interpreted that a vast majority of 72.2% of the respondents are employed below managerial level where 47.8% work on operational level and 24.4% are supervisory level employees. Majority of the respondent's academic qualification was diploma level and below dominating 72.6% and 23% of the respondents had bachelor's degree. Only 12 respondents representing 4.4% of the sample claimed to have a master's degree. The demographic analysis inferred that majority of the employees working in Maldives tourism industry are fresh school leavers employed in operational jobs and earn relatively a low income compared to the living cost of the country.

4.2 Descriptive and Normality Test

Descriptive statistics are used to illustrate quantitative descriptions in a simplified way. It gives a concise view of large amounts of data in a simple summary. The information is presented by calculating mean and standard deviation. The mean for each variable is used as a measure of central tendency and standard deviation (SD) is employed as a measure of dispersion. A smaller SD indicates that the data results are more precise and accurate. However, according to Lee, et al. (2015), SD values within a range of ±2 represents that the measurements are near the true value and in acceptable range.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
WO1	270	1.0	5.0	3.081	1.3933	.078	.148	-1.322	.295
WO2	270	1.0	5.0	2.641	1.5184	.259	.148	-1.453	.295
WO3	270	1.0	5.0	2.626	1.4649	.339	.148	-1.291	.295
WO4	270	1.0	5.0	3.359	1.5232	-.407	.148	-1.269	.295
IC1	270	1.0	5.0	3.570	1.1981	-.376	.148	-.839	.295
IC2	270	1.0	5.0	4.056	1.2166	-1.105	.148	.099	.295
IC3	270	1.0	5.0	2.163	1.3590	.740	.148	-.808	.295
IC4	270	1.0	5.0	3.011	1.4594	.024	.148	-1.368	.295
CC1	270	1.0	5.0	2.467	1.4105	.461	.148	-1.116	.295
CC2	270	1.0	5.0	3.300	1.3506	-.258	.148	-1.133	.295
CC3	270	1.0	5.0	3.289	1.4524	-.286	.148	-1.241	.295
CC4	270	1.0	5.0	3.344	1.4259	-.330	.148	-1.149	.295
ICO1	270	1.0	5.0	2.104	1.3149	.934	.148	-.304	.295
ICO2	270	1.0	5.0	2.367	1.3940	.535	.148	-1.031	.295
ICO3	270	1.0	5.0	2.063	1.2990	.949	.148	-.289	.295
ICO4	270	1.0	5.0	2.174	1.3342	.889	.148	-.433	.295
EP1	270	1.0	5.0	3.722	1.4431	-.746	.148	-.875	.295
EP2	270	1.0	5.0	3.693	1.4499	-.734	.148	-.875	.295
EP3	270	1.0	5.0	3.696	1.4339	-.651	.148	-1.031	.295
EP4	270	1.0	5.0	3.433	1.4738	-.441	.148	-1.219	.295
EP5	270	1.0	5.0	3.659	1.4993	-.624	.148	-1.112	.295
EP6	270	1.0	5.0	3.611	1.4456	-.562	.148	-1.128	.295
EP7	270	1.0	5.0	3.737	1.4433	-.713	.148	-.967	.295
EP8	270	1.0	5.0	3.659	1.3724	-.619	.148	-.918	.295
WO	270	1.00	5.00	2.9269	1.22644	.115	.148	-1.344	.295
IC	270	1.00	5.00	3.2000	.94150	-.178	.148	-.850	.295
CC	270	1.00	5.00	3.1000	1.01737	-.051	.148	-.717	.295
ICO	270	1.00	4.75	2.1769	1.13841	.693	.148	-.776	.295
EP	270	1.00	5.00	3.6514	1.29606	-.568	.148	-1.249	.295
Valid N (listwise)	270								

Table 2: Descriptive and Normality Analysis

Table 2 illustrated that among the independent variables, the mean of inadequate compensation topped with a mean value of 3.20 and SD of 0.94, indicating that the respondents perceived that low salary affects their performance the most. Second highest mean is career concerns with a mean value of 3.10 and its SD 1.01, signifying that career growth opportunities have significant influence on employee performance. Work overload has a mean value of 2.92 with its SD 1.22, illustrating that it also impacts employee performance but not as much as the other two variables. Interpersonal conflict has the lowest mean with a mean value of 2.17 with SD value of 1.13 suggesting that the respondents feel that it's not an issue compared to their compensation, career concerns and workload.

A normality test ensures the sample data has been collected from a normally distributed population (Das & Imon, 2015). It compares the shape of the collected data to a normally distributed set of values with the same mean and SD (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). Data normality of this study is tested using skewness and kurtosis. In a normal distribution skewness of the data should range between -1 and +1, where values lower than the

range indicate longer tail toward the left side of the distribution and higher values indicate a longer tail on the right (Hair, et al., 2016). Furthermore, kurtosis values between -7 and +7 are widely accepted and considered normal (Hair, et al., 2014). All the skewness kurtosis of the data was within that range suggesting that the distribution was normal.

4.3 Reliability Test

Reliability coefficient is the most widely used diagnostic measure using Cronbach's alpha to assess consistency of the entire scale. Cronbach's alpha values higher than 0.60 indicates moderate strength of association while values higher than 0.70 suggests high internal consistency (Hair, et al., 2014). The overall reliability of the scale of 24 items were 0.851 indicating high internal consistency among the individual items that are measured.

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Work Overload	4	0.851
Inadequate Compensation	4	0.685
Career Concerns	4	0.693
Interpersonal Conflicts	4	0.874
Employee performance	8	0.965
Overall	**24**	**0.851**

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

4.4 Analysis of Assumptions of Multiple Regression

4.4.1 Normal Distribution for Dependent Variable

A normality test ensures the sample data has been collected from a normally distributed population (Das & Imon, 2015). Nonnormality can have serious impact if the sample size is smaller than 50 however, the consequences effectively gets diminished when the sample reaches 200 and above (Hair, et al., 2014). The study has a single dependent variable (EP) and hence, univariate profiling was done using histogram. As shown in Figure 1 the residual of EP demonstrates that the normality assumption is satisfactory.

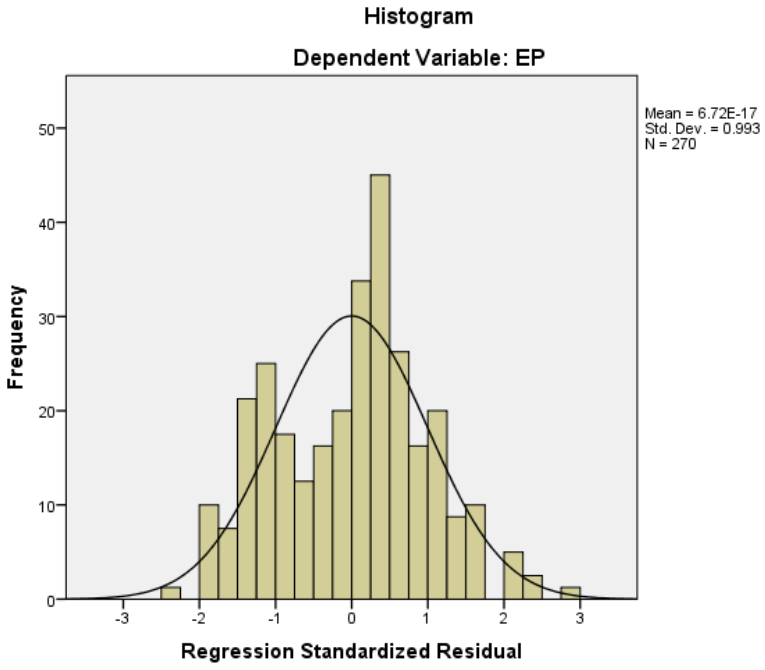

Figure 1: Normality of standard residuals

4.4.2 Non-Existence of Auto Correlation

The study tested autocorrelation using Durbin–Watson statistic values. The Durbin–Watson static value ranges from 0 to 4, where a value of 2 describes no autocorrelation. A value less than 2 indicates positive autocorrelation and conversely values between 2 and 4 indicate negative autocorrelation (Saunders, et al., 2007). However, according to Field (2018) values ranging from 1.0 to 3.0 are acceptable and values lower or higher than that needs attention. Table 4 shows the Durbin–Watson statistic value at 1.16 indicating positive autocorrelation within the acceptable range.

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.298[a]	.089	.075	1.24649	1.160
a. Predictors: (Constant), ICO, WO, IC, CC b. Dependent Variable: EP					

Table 4: Analysis of Autocorrelation

4.4.3 Non-existence of multi-collinearity

Multicollinearity explains the extent to which a variable's effect can be accounted over other variables used in a study (Saunders, et al., 2007). The study employed tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) to test multicollinearity. Hair, et al. (2014) suggests tolerance value 0.10 or less and corresponding VIF value 10 or higher indicates high collinearity. Table 5 shows tolerance coefficients for independent variables are between 0.389 and 0.726 and VIF values between 1.378 and 2.573, indicating no multicollinearity between independent variables.

Coefficients[a]							
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	4.137	.283		14.621	.000		
WO	-.336	.073	-.318	-4.619	.000	.726	1.378
IC	.259	.122	.188	2.126	.034	.437	2.287
CC	-.155	.120	-.122	-1.297	.196	.389	2.573
ICO	.068	.084	.060	.813	.417	.629	1.590
a. Dependent Variable: EP							

Table 5: Analysis of multicollinearity

4.4.4 Non-existence of homoscedasticity

Homoscedasticity assumes that the dependent variable displays identical levels of variance across the independent variables (Saunders, et al., 2007). To fully establish this relationship, the variance of the dependent variable should be comparatively equal at each value of the independent variable. Unequal dispersion of values indicates the relationship to be heteroscedastic (Hair, et al., 2014). Slight heteroscedasticity has minor effect on significance of tests, however, significantly heteroscedastic relationships can weaken the analysis and may result to serious distortion of findings. This may also increase the possibility of a type I error. All scatter plots for dependent variable illustrated in Figure indicates that

data are evenly distributed, suggesting the presence of small amount of homoscedasticity in this analysis.

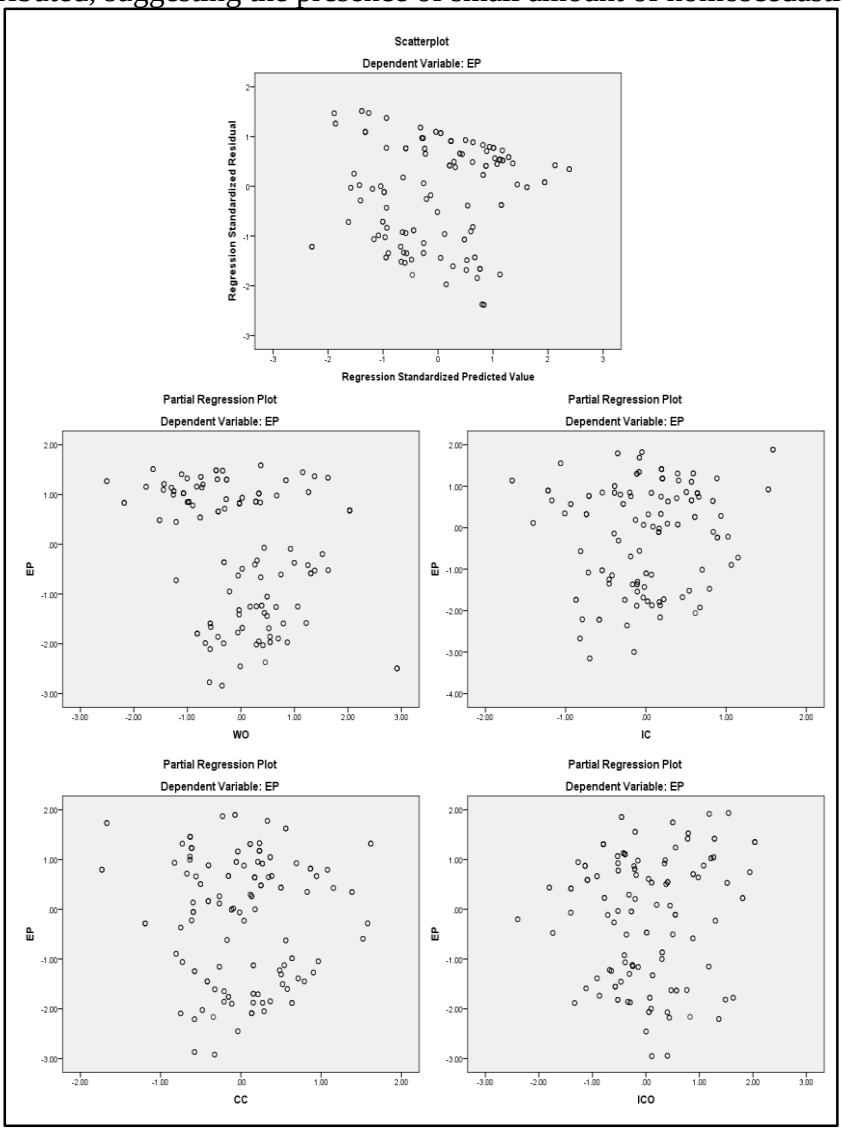

Figure 12: Homoscedasticity

4.4.5 Analysis of normality of the residuals

Residual examination reflects the inexplicable portion the dependent variable as any nonlinear measures of the relationship are shown as residuals (Hair, et al., 2014). The residuals show a trend that confirms the assumptions made for regression analysis or failing them should not show a tendency that denies them (Martin, et al., 2017). Normality is satisfied if the residuals are plotted in a straight line against its corresponding points of a normal distribution (Martin, et al., 2017). Normal probability plot for the dependent variable (EP) and independent variables (WO, IC, CC, ICO) demonstrated a linear relationship with each other as presented in

Figure . Hence, it can be concluded that there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables.

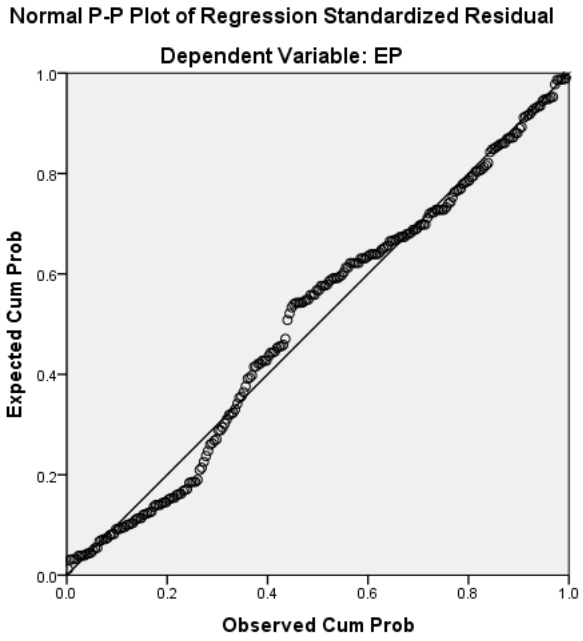

Figure 13: Linear relationship

4.5 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is commonly used for causal prediction and forecasting. It determines the relationship between dependent and independent variables and the variables correlate with each other (Murali, et al., 2017).

4.5.1 Model Fitness

The model fitness determines the estimated model achieves adequate levels on statistical measures, identifies the projected relationships, and reaches practical significance. The R^2 value ranges from 0.0 to 1.0, where 0 indicates the model is unfit and a higher value describes greater fit (Saunders, et al., 2007).

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.298[a]	.089	.075	1.24649	1.160

a. Predictors: (Constant), ICO, WO, IC, CC
b. Dependent Variable: EP

According to **Error! Reference source not found.**, the R^2 is 0.089 indicating that 8.9% of the employee performance (dependent variable) is explained by the independent variables. Adjusted R^2 is 0.075 suggesting that the model is not a good fit model since the value is lower than 0.60. Murali, et al. (2017) suggests that a good fit model should predict a minimum of 60% of the variation from the dependent variable (employee performance). However, as a rule of thumb Hair, et al. (2014) suggests R^2 value 0.75 as good fit, 0.5 as moderate fit, and 0.25 as weak model fit.

4.5.2 Analysis of Model Significance

Model significance shows the probability of a relationship between variables are caused due to a factor of interest rather than by chance (Hair, et al., 2014). The study used F-test which is commonly expressed as p-value, to assess the overall significance of the model and ensure that shifts in independent variables are correlated with changes in the dependent variable.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	40.119	4	10.030	6.455	.000[b]
	Residual	411.739	265	1.554		

	Total	451.859	269			
a. Dependent Variable: EP b. Predictors: (Constant), ICO, WO, IC, CC						

Table 6: Model significance - ANOVA

The ANOVA table above demonstrated significance value as 0.000 indicating the model is extremely significant for the study. It shows that the predictors (WO, IC, CC, IC) simultaneously impacted employee performance. The p-value ranges between 0 and 1, where a value less than 0.05 is statistically significant and a value greater than 0.05 are not statistically significant (Hair, et al., 2014). A p-value ≤ 0.05 is statistically significant and demonstrates strong evidence against null hypothesis (Frost, 2020). Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected and accepted the alternate hypothesis.

4.5.3 Analysis of Hypotheses

To evaluate validity of the claims from the sample population, the hypotheses were tested by employing methods of multiple regression analysis. A p-value ≤ 0.05 indicate a better fit of the selected model than the intercept-only model, hence the null hypothesis is rejected. A larger p-value > 0.05 demonstrate strong evidence for null hypothesis and the alternate hypothesis is rejected (Hair, et al., 2014).

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	4.137	.283		14.621	.000		
	WO	-.336	.073	-.318	-4.619	.000	.726	1.378
	IC	.259	.122	.188	2.126	.034	.437	2.287
	CC	-.155	.120	-.122	-1.297	.196	.389	2.573
	ICO	.068	.084	.060	.813	.417	.629	1.590
a. Dependent Variable: EP								

Table 7: Beta coefficients – Occupational stress and employee performance

According to Table 7, work overload beta coefficient value is -0.318 with a significant value of 0.000, which is below 0.05, demonstrating negative significant influence on employee performance. It can be interpreted that the level of stress increases with workload and has significant negative effects on employee performance. Compensation's beta coefficient stands at 0.188 with a significance value of 0.034 (lower than 0.05) indicating a positive relationship between compensation and employee performance. It is inferred that employee performance increases with increase in compensation hence, inadequate compensation escalates level of stress and has negative effects on employee performance. Career concerns has a beta coefficient of -0.122 with significant value 0.196, which is higher than 0.05. In this case career concern is a contributing factor to stress, but it is not significant. Interpersonal conflict's beta coefficient value is 0.060 with a significant value of 0.417, which is higher than 0.05. It is interpreted that interpersonal conflicts do not have a significant influence on occupational stress and employee performance. Overall, work overload and inadequate compensation have significant negative influence on employee performance and career concerns and interpersonal conflicts do not have any significant impact on employee performance.

4.6 Summary of Findings

Hypotheses	Significant (P<0.05)	Beta Coefficient	Result	Interpretation
H^1: There is a significant positive impact between work overload and	0.000	-0.318	Accepted	H^1 is accepted as the p-value is less than 0.05. Its beta coefficient value of -0.318 indicates that work overload

employee performance				has 31.8% negative impact on employee performance.
H^2: There is a significant positive impact between inadequate compensation and employee performance	0.034	0.188	Accepted	H^2 is accepted as the p-value is less than 0.05. With a beta coefficient value of 0.188, it demonstrated that employee performance increases with compensation growth, hence, inadequate compensation leads to poor performance.
H^3: There is a significant positive impact between career concerns and employee performance	0.196	-0.122	Rejected	H^3 is rejected as its p-value (0.196) was greater than 0.05. The beta coefficient was at -0.122 and hence it was inferred that career concerns contribute to stress but not at a significant level.
H^4: There is a significant positive impact between interpersonal conflicts and employee performance.	0.417	-0.060	Rejected	H^4 is rejected because its p-value (0.417) was greater than 0.05. With a beta coefficient value of -0.060, it was interpreted that interpersonal conflicts do not have a significant influence on stress and employee performance.

Table 8: Hypotheses acceptance and rejection

5.0 Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

5.1 Conclusion

The main objective of current study was to evaluate the impact of occupational stress on employee performance. Hence, it is evident that like any other sector, employees of tourism industry undergo occupational stress that significantly has negative impact on their performance.

The test results of the hypothesis one (H^1) revealed that work overload has significant adverse impact on employee performance. On the contratry, a study by Oyoo (2016) stated that workoverload does not have negative effects on performance, rather triggers positive stress that enhances employee performance. Another study conducted by Ashfaq, et al. (2013) in Pakistan revealed that the relationship between work overload and employee performance is considerably weak. The author states that the reason could be because the studied region is a developing country where large extended families live together and the employees ignore those factors to endure a decent job. The current study was also conducted in a developing country (Maldives) that has a similar family structure and livelihood. However, the result didn't agree with Ashfaq, et al. (2013) indicating that irrespective of employees background including country, region or social structrure, stress escalates with workload and adversly effects employee performance. This finding supports the literature by Goonetilleke, et al. (2018), Alias, et al. (2019) and Haq, et al. (2020), who conducted simillar studies in various sectors including tourism industry. They also concluded work overload as one of the major contributer to work stress that has a significant negative impact on employee performance. It is therefore inferred that employees induce occupational stress when work demands exceed an individual's abilities to do the assigned tasks and has significant adverse impact on employee performance.

The results of second hypothesis (H^2) showed a positive relationship between compensation and employee performance. It is inferred that employee performance increases with increase in compensation. Hence, inadequate compensation escalates level of stress and has negative effects on employee performance. This finding supports the past researches by Danish, et al. (2015), Bhui, et al. (2016), and Zhe Wang (2017). The researchers suggested that that employees are likely to induce stress if they lack a decent benefit package or their salary does not reflect the amount of effort they invest in work. Their finding showed that occupational stress has negative impact on employee performance and a handsome pay is essential to overcome the effects of stress. Similar researches by Alianto & Anindita (2018) and Prasetio, et al. (2019) concluded that compensation does not have any relation with occupational stress. However, they stated that compensation plays a major role in job satisfaction. A study by Awadh, et al. (2015) revealed that inadequate compensation stresses employees, but the stress is manageable. Therefore, studies on the relationship between compensation, stress and employee performance showed inconsistent and contradictory results.

As for hypothesis three and four (H^3 & H^4), career concerns and interpersonal conflicts might not negatively impact on employee performance. Current study rejected these two hypotheses as its p-values were greater than 0.05. While some of the similar studies reviewed in this literature has shown that career concerns and interpersonal conflicts have negative effects on employee performance, other studies concluded that it does not have any direct correlation or have very little impact on employee performance. However, they all agreed that both these variables significantly induce occupational stress. In this notion, Aggrey (2017) found out that lack of career development and advancement opportunities significantly increases occupational stress. Nevertheless, there was a weak correlation between occupational stress and employee performance. Khuong & Yen (2016) also found out that lack of career development opportunities does not directly affect employee performance. On the contrary, a study by Vijayan (2018) revealed that career concerns such as job security significantly increases occupational stress which has strong negative impact on employees' performance. A study by (Mahiri & Orwa, 2016) found out that interpersonal conflicts within an organization negatively affects efficiency and productivity of employees. Even though empirical studies on the relationship between career concerns, interpersonal conflicts and employee performance revealed inconsistent and contradictory results, all researchers reviewed in this study unanimously agreed that those two variables are among major contributors to occupational stress.
Hence, the research concluded that increased workload and inadequate compensation escalates level of stress and significantly reduces employee performance.

5.2 Managerial Implications

It is imperative for resort managements to concede that both individual and organizational level interventions are crucial for effective stress management for achieving increased employee performance. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are drawn to enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing of the employees and increase their performance.

1. Not to increase work demands in a way that exceeds an individual's ability to complete the assigned tasks, as it has significant adverse impact on the employee's performance.

2. Ensure that the employees' benefit package or compensation reflects the amount of effort they invest on work.

3. Ensure job security, career development opportunities are provided to employees as career concerns such as job insecurity, under/over promotion act as a major contributor of stress.

4. Build an organizational culture that ensures interpersonal conflicts are diminished within the organization.

5.3 Limitation

The limitation encountered though this study was the unavailability of respondents for a wider representation of the industry. Due to COVID19, over 75% of the tourist facilities in the Maldives were shut down and majority of their employees were made redundant. Hence, due to limited number of employees that are

currently on the job, the researcher was unable to stretch the respondents across the industry. Moreover, the research instrument developed for the study could have been more profound that could put more weight the variables studied. The study investigated a limited number of independent variables. This could be another limitation experienced in this research as there are several other factors that contribute to stress and employee performance.

5.3 Implications for Future Research

Since there are limited/no researches done in the context of Maldives tourism industry and the current research was conducted within the entire industry population, future researches can be designed to be more structured and comprehensive. Focusing the influence of various demographic variables such as age, gender, nationality, length of service etc. on stress and employee's performance may give a better understanding of the subject. Future studies could also investigate other independent variables that contribute to occupational stress and may have negative effects on employee performance. This would also facilitate to obtain a better analytical result.

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