

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Workplace stress and its influence on employee performance at Almxpress, Guayas, Ecuador

Estrés laboral y su influencia en el desempeño de los trabajadores de la empresa Almxpress, Guayas, Ecuador

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Abstract Human talent is the foundation of every organization, and its success depends not only on its clients but also on the commitment and dedication of its employees. This research aimed to identify the causes of work-related stress and its impact on the performance of employees at Almxpress, located in the city of Guayaquil, Guayas province. A field research methodology was applied, with a non-experimental, cross-sectional design and a quantitative approach. Surveys were conducted using the Likert scale, and analytical, deductive, and statistical methods were used to process the data. The results show that work-related stress is a growing problem that affects employees' well-being and organizational performance. Consequences include reduced productivity, increased errors, workplace accidents, and a deteriorated work environment. These issues lead to significant financial losses for the company. As a recommendation, the study proposes strategies to strengthen employee engagement, improve working conditions, and provide psychological support. Additionally, it suggests evaluating each proposed approach in detail to ensure its effectiveness and real adaptation within the organizational environment.

Keywords work-related stress, job performance, productivity, human talent.

Resumen El talento humano es la base de toda organización, y su éxito no depende únicamente de sus clientes, sino también del compromiso y la dedicación de sus trabajadores. Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo identificar las causas del estrés laboral y su impacto en el desempeño de los empleados de la empresa Almxpress, ubicada en la ciudad de Guayaquil, provincia del Guayas. Se aplicó una metodología de investigación de campo con un diseño no experimental y de corte transversal, bajo un enfoque cuantitativo. Las encuestas se estructuraron utilizando la escala de Likert, y se emplearon métodos analítico, deductivo y estadístico para el análisis de los datos. Los resultados evidencian que el estrés laboral es un problema creciente que afecta la salud de los trabajadores y el rendimiento de las empresas. Se observaron consecuencias como disminución de la productividad, incremento de errores, accidentes laborales y deterioro del clima organizacional. Estos factores generan pérdidas económicas significativas para la empresa. Como recomendación, se plantea la implementación de estrategias enfocadas en fortalecer el compromiso laboral, mejorar las condiciones de trabajo y ofrecer apoyo psicológico. Asimismo, se sugiere evaluar detalladamente cada propuesta para asegurar su efectividad y lograr una adaptación real dentro del entorno organizacional.

Palabras clave desempeño laboral; estrés laboral; productividad, talento humano.

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Introduction

At the moment phenomena as the globalization, the competitiveness, the Modifications in the work environment after the pandemic have generated changes in the organizational structure and the conditions of the positions work, as well as situations personal that they have intervened in the performance of the workers, along with other psychosocial factors that affect the safety and health of staff, as well as the productivity of the companies.

Work stress is a serious problem at a social and economic level. It affects the health of the worker and minimises company productivity, making them less profitable and competitive in the more up-to-date and forefront market, where human resources are a fundamental part of the company's success (Cortés, 2022).

In this way, work stress becomes a problem that needs to be addressed. It is investigated and addressed to identify areas for organizational improvement. Workplace stress affects the workers' health and directly affects the company because the worker lowers their productivity and work performance, and has difficulty relating to others. In turn, this generates greater absenteeism, sick leave, and the need for replacement, which are many reasons that make timely treatment necessary (Zúñiga, 2019).

Work-related stress affects workers' mental and physical health and has economic consequences for the companies where they work (Fuentes, 2022).

He stress labor is the one who promotes the idea in the worker of not being up to the daily activities of his position, causing this sensations of anxiety, fear, frustration and anger it which undoubtedly low the performance and in occasions causes diseases and accidents, this plays a dynamic scenario complete of mergers, reorganization of human resources and exponential technological development, where the need to reduce costs, increase productivity and customer satisfaction prevails (Cortés & Bedolla, 2022).

The aforementioned causes work pressure, as these factors are also influenced by other social factors that have changed and are an added factor in this system, such as lower levels of autonomy, a greater burden due to a reduction in the number of employees, greater emotional demands, or work objectives that are not clearly defined, clear, or accepted.

Work stress has also been the subject of study in Ecuador. Concern. According to a report by the National Institute of Statistics and Census (Ecuador in figures, 2021), a worrying trend is observed in the country. The data reveals that a significant percentage of Ecuador's working population reports

high stress related to their employment.

In another order of ideas, performance labor is a discipline HE has been studying occasionally. Organizations are interested in studying this term to understand and explain various aspects that affect company growth and effectiveness. It turns out that it is essential to know performance labor (Bautista & Cienfuegos, 2020).

Therefore, job performance is one of an organization's main strengths, becoming necessary for obtaining sustainable results. It is a set of behaviors and attitudes observed in collaborators who intervene with the company's objectives (Koopmans, 2015).

He performance Labor is the value that each individual adds to the company individually in a given period, in the search for the objectives set, in such a way that the measurement and performance of the collaborator, the most successful companies in the world place performance management at the first on their list and invest financial resources and much time to maintain Good performance, good management can improve the productivity of each employee (Argoti, 2020).

In this line, it should be considered that one of the key factors that influences Staff performance is the remuneration received and the company's stability. In this way, it seeks to create a framework that is labor-efficient and favorable for the realization of labor-intensive activities, through the signature of collective contracts and negotiations carried out in compliance with legal and regulatory standards, incorporating remunerations that satisfy employees, leading to an improvement in labor performance by some of these. It is fundamental that, as part of the evaluation process and definition of the job's tasks, employee performance parameters, job stability that the organization can provide, and the interaction (Waves & Villafuerte, 2014) are determined.

Labor performance is a process that determines the success of an organization in achieving its work activities and objectives; in general, at the organizational level, the measurement of labor performance provides an assessment of the compliance with the organization's strategic goals at the individual level (Cerrón & Valerio, 2018).

Job performance is the worker's behavior in pursuing the set objectives; this constitutes the individual's strategy to achieve the objectives. Performance labor complements the determination, as one of the beginning fundamentals of the psychology of performance is the fixation of goals, which actively influences behavior and improvement in performance because it aids the person to focus their efforts on challenging goals when the goals are easy (Guevara, 2016).

According to Mejía et al. (2019), it has been observed that the conditions of job challenging in Latin America. The increase in labor responsibilities contributes to high stress levels among regional workers. Factors such as job insecurity, lack of recognition, long working hours, and lack of emotional support can intensify stress in the Latin American work environment. These factors can have negative consequences for the physical and mental health of workers, as well as their general welfare.

This raises questions about working conditions, the balance between personal and professional life, as well as the need to implement strategies effective of prevention and management of the stress in he around labor Ecuadorian, is a factor that HE presents by the demands labor in he position of job associated to the shortage of resources physicists, materials and he interact in environments of strain (Chiang et al., 2017). It affects workers physically and mentally, causing chronic illnesses and mental disorders.

This research aims to analyze the influence of work stress on workers' Performance at the Almexpress company in Guayaquil, province of Guayas.

Methodology

According to Arias (2012), research can be of two types: documentary and field. Documentary research is a process based on the search, recovery, analysis, critique, and interpretation of secondary data, that is, data obtained and recorded by other researchers in documentary sources: printed, audiovisual, or electronic. Field research consists of collecting data directly from the subjects being researched, or from the reality where the events occur (primary data). This research was field research.

Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza (2018) indicated that the design of a research project can be experimental or non-experimental. The experimental research design has initial and final correlational and explanatory scopes. While the design Non-experimental is carried out without deliberately manipulating the independent variables, it is based on categories, concepts, variables, events, phenomena, or contexts that have already occurred or occurred in their natural context without the direct intervention of the researcher. The latter can be cross-sectional, when data is collected at a single moment or time, or longitudinal, a study that collects data at different points to make inferences about the evolution of the research problem or phenomenon, its causes, and effects. This research had a non-experimental, cross-sectional design.

According to Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza (2018),

the population is the set of all cases that meet a series of specifications. This research's population will consist of the 10 employees at the company under study and 50 regular customers selected for the survey.

The sample is a subgroup of the population or universe of interest, from which the relevant data will be collected, and it must be representative of that population (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018). No sampling was performed since the entire population of 50 clients was assessed.

Likert-scale surveys were administered to diagnose work-related stress among workers at the Almexpress company, and another to determine their job performance. A structured survey with closed questions: "It consists of a set of questions regarding one or more variables that contain categories or response options that have been previously delimited". The response options were limited so that participants could choose based on their opinion (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018). The instruments used are a questionnaire on a Likert scale with five response alternatives and their respective values.

In this research, the following methods were applied: analytical, deductive, and statistical.

According to Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza (2018), research can take three approaches: quantitative, qualitative, or mixed. The quantitative approach offers the possibility of broadly generalizing results, provides control over the phenomena, and provides a perspective based on counts and magnitudes. It also offers greater repeatability and focuses on specific elements of these phenomena, facilitating comparisons between similar studies.

The qualitative approach provides depth to the data, dispersion, interpretive richness, contextualization of the environment or surroundings, details, and unique experiences. It also provides a fresh, natural, and comprehensive perspective. The mixed approach utilizes the strengths of both types of inquiry, combining them and attempting to minimize their potential weaknesses (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018). This research had a quantitative approach.

Results and discussion

This section presents the results of applying the instruments directed to the workers and clients of the company Almexpress to determine the influence of stress and diagnose the workers' work performance. Finally, the section proposes guidelines for reducing the stress of labor and improving the performance of the workers of the company Almexpress City of Guayaquil, province of Guayas.

Results corresponding to the specific objective: Diagnose

the performance labor of the workers of the company Almxpress in the city of Guayaquil, province of the Guayas.

Table 1 shows that 40% of Almxpress employees report familiarity with work-related stress in their roles. In comparison, 30% rarely experience it, 20% report little awareness, and 10% only experience it occasionally.

In this sense, the company needs to raise awareness about this critical issue among its employees, be able to diagnose how many suffer from it, and provide them with immediate support.

Table 1. Work stress

Worth	Response categories	N	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
5	Always	4	40	40
4	Almost always	2	20	60
3	Sometimes	1	10	70
2	Hardly ever	3	30	100
1	Never	0	0	0

Table 2 shows that 70% of Almxpress employees state that they always perform their assigned monthly duties, each fulfilling an important role in the company's optimal functioning. Another 20% complete their duties almost constantly, while the remaining 10% only occasionally.

In this way, observing that the majority does comply, it could be said that the administrative part is being managed well internally.

Table 2. Completion of assigned tasks

Worth	Response categories	N	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
5	Always	7	70	70
4	Almost always	2	20	90
3	Sometimes	1	10	10
2	Hardly ever	0	0	100
1	Never	0	0	0

According to Table 3, 50% of Almxpress employees state they have always experienced stress; 20% have experienced stress almost always, the other 20% have experienced it occasionally, while 10% have rarely experienced this situation within the company. The results clearly show that if a problem within the company affects employees, its growth requires that tasks be divided among more employees.

Table 3. Experience work stress

Worth	Response categories	N	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
5	Always	5	50	50
4	Almost always	2	20	70
3	Sometimes	2	20	90
2	Hardly ever	1	10	100
1	Never	0	0	0

According to Table 4, 30% of the workers of the company Almxpress affirm that they have always managed their stress situation correctly, 20% indicated almost constantly, and the other 40% believe that they sometimes managed it. Finally, 10% mentioned that they have rarely controlled the situation, a worrying scenario in that they do not know how to do it, the company does not help them or does not make them aware of it and in the same way does not provide them with sufficient support in this aspect, which although many do not know it, is also important like any other disease that affects health and functions.

Table 4. Stress situation control

Worth	Response categories	N	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
5	Always	3	30	30
4	Almost always	2	20	50
3	Sometimes	4	40	90
2	Hardly ever	1	10	100
1	Never	0	0	0

According to Table 5, 70% of Almxpress employees indicate that their level of performance in their work activities has always been high, 20% mention it almost constantly, and the other 10% indicate it is sometimes, taking a role of honesty in the survey applied. Considering that the majority consider themselves to have a high level of performance, which is necessary in a company that primarily works in customer service nationwide, they provide confidence in their duties and meet the company's objectives.

With the data collected in Table 6, 50% of Almxpress workers state that their colleagues always perform well in their duties, 20% say they almost always perform well, the other 10% sometimes, 10% mention that they rarely, and finally the other 10% responded that they have never seen their colleagues perform well at work, which reflects that the majority do believe they are doing a good job.

Table 5. Level of performance of work activities

Worth	Response categories	N	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
5	Always	7	70	70
4	Almost always	2	20	90
3	Sometimes	1	10	100
2	Hardly ever	0	0	0
1	Never	0	0	0

It is always necessary to take into account the needs of workers, as well as the way they relate to each other, whether positively or negatively.

Table 6. Good work performance of colleagues

Worth	Response categories	N	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
5	Always	5	50	50
4	Almost always	2	20	70
3	Sometimes	1	10	80
2	Hardly ever	1	10	90
1	Never	1	10	100

According to Table 7, 50% of Almxpress workers say they can continually improve or raise their work performance. Twenty percent almost continuously, since they say they complete their eight daily tasks with great effort and mention that they already perform at their best, and the other twenty percent sometimes. In comparison, 10% rarely, since they are in doubt.

The company has few workers for the number of functions they must perform.

Table 7. Incentives from managers improve job performance

Worth	Response categories	N	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
5	Always	7	70	70
4	Almost always	1	10	80
3	Sometimes	2	20	100
2	Hardly ever	0	0	0
1	Never	0	0	0

According to the table 7, 70% of Almxpress workers ac-

cept that an incentive from management would always help them significantly improve their performance within the company, since they have a basic salary. 10% mentioned that it is almost always, and the other 20% indicated that sometimes an incentive is necessary because they spend more than 8 hours working.

A survey conducted among ALMXPRESS employees revealed that 50% are aware of workplace stress, demonstrating the need to educate their employees more about this issue, diagnose how many suffer from it, and provide immediate support. A high percentage also fully fulfill their duties, a positive result for the company. Based on the responses, it is clear that there is a good relationship between colleagues, and everyone's work performance is successful. They also agree that they would like incentives from management to encourage them to achieve even better results. They receive a base salary, but work more than eight hours daily.

This happens because organizational decisions are often made with management involvement, which somewhat reduces the satisfaction of employees willing to contribute to improvement proposals. Stress also causes a strong physiological reaction, disrupting normal bodily function. Furthermore, emotions and cognitive abilities control exposure.

Qualitative data support this conclusion from the survey, indicating that problems are a potential stressor because they slow down company processes, foster poor communication, and affect the work environment. Furthermore, the authorities stated that the influence and support of leaders are essential to prevent stress. Finally, based on all the shortcomings and needs identified after the survey and physical visits to the company, it is concluded that they need to design strategies that serve as a guide to ensure adequate job performance and thus guarantee a stress-free work environment. Through the survey carried out on the 50 clients of the company Almxpress, which were obtained from the list that rests in the company's system, precise information could be collected according to stress and work performance, detailing that 60% of those surveyed do not know about work performance, likewise they mentioned that they would like to have a better experience with their shipments, a very encouraging fact is that 90% of the Almxpress clients surveyed answered yes I would recommend the company to my friends.

Work pressure can leave workers exhausted and physically or mentally impaired, affecting the balance between mind and body. When one is affected, the other is affected, resulting in more serious problems for the individual in the workplace, society, and individuals. Early warning of work-related stress can help prevent work-related stress and maintain good health.

In short, the effects of stress are medium—to long-term, with physiological consequences, such as gastrointestinal problems and pain, muscle aches, headaches, etc.; they also

have emotional consequences, such as anxiety, depression, irritability, sleep problems, and other symptoms such as poor memory and a tendency to make mistakes in assigned tasks.

Constant exposure to work-related stress can lead to a variety of health conditions. As mentioned above, managers and human resources departments must take measures and strategies to ensure employees do not fall into these situations. A healthy, energetic employee will perform better, greet customers enthusiastically, and close effective sales.

All of this is necessary for the Almexpress company to operate correctly. It must ensure that its customers are always happy with the service they receive and can resolve any concerns, such as the virtual mailbox where their purchases arrive and are then shipped to their locations.

Conclusions

Based on the findings obtained during the research on work-related stress and its influence on the performance of employees at the Almexpress company in Guayaquil, the following fundamental conclusions can be drawn. It was found that a high percentage of workers experience constant stress, which demonstrates that this phenomenon is rooted in organizational culture. This stress is directly related to work overload, lack of control over assigned tasks, and insufficient institutional attention to staff mental health. The relationship between high stress levels and decreased job performance was evident. Although most workers claim to be performing their duties, they also report high levels of burnout, which can translate into errors, lower productivity, and higher turnover in the medium and long term. Factors such as staff shortages in the face of business growth, a lack of incentives, and low staff participation in decision-making increase the emotional burden on employees and reduce their motivation. The current structure is unsustainable if it does not adapt to new operational demands. Research shows that employees' emotional and physical well-being is key to achieving efficient performance. Neglecting this aspect leads to financial losses and deteriorates the organizational climate. The lack of clear strategies for stress management represents a critical institutional weakness. Despite the stress, employees make a notable effort to maintain high standards in their work. However, this positive perception could be unsustainable without structural improvements, as constant overexertion often leads to chronic burnout. It is concluded that designing and implementing a comprehensive human talent management strategy that includes hiring more staff, mental health programs, stress management training, precise role definitions, and adequate incentives is vital. These measures will

improve productivity, job satisfaction, and customer service. Almexpress faces a strategic opportunity: recognizing workplace stress as a management priority. Addressing it is not only a matter of social responsibility but also a decisive action to sustain business growth, optimize staff performance, and build customer loyalty.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Data availability statement

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Statement on the use of AI

The authors acknowledge the use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies to improve the readability and clarity of the article.

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