

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

## Work-related stress and its impact on employee performance at the Executive Hotel, Portoviejo, Manabí

Estrés laboral y su incidencia en el desempeño de los trabajadores del Hotel Ejecutivo, Portoviejo, Manabí

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**Abstract** This research examines the link between work-related stress and employee performance at the Executive Hotel in Portoviejo, Ecuador. Surveys were conducted using a quantitative, non-experimental, and descriptive-correlational approach with all 12 staff members. The study measured three dimensions of stress (physical, psychological, and organizational) and five performance aspects (motivation, interpersonal relations, innovation, work-life balance, and professional development). Findings reveal a significant presence of physical and psychological stress symptoms affecting job performance. Workplace relations, organizational climate, and growth opportunities were also influential. The study concludes that work-related stress substantially harms employee productivity and well-being, highlighting the need for targeted interventions.

**Keywords** work-related stress, job performance, organizational climate, mental health, motivation.

**Resumen** El estudio analiza la relación entre el estrés laboral y el desempeño de los trabajadores del Hotel Ejecutivo, Portoviejo, Ecuador. Utilizando un enfoque cuantitativo, diseño no experimental y alcance descriptivo-correlacional, se encuestó a los 12 empleados del hotel. Se midieron tres dimensiones del estrés (física, psicológica y organizacional) y cinco del desempeño (motivación, relaciones interpersonales, innovación, equilibrio vida-trabajo y desarrollo profesional). Se halló que una proporción significativa de los empleados sufre síntomas físicos y psicológicos de estrés, lo que impacta negativamente en su rendimiento. Las relaciones laborales, el ambiente organizacional y las oportunidades de desarrollo profesional también influyen. Se concluye que el estrés laboral afecta considerablemente la productividad, bienestar y motivación de los empleados, por lo que se requieren medidas correctivas.

**Palabras clave** estrés laboral, desempeño laboral, ambiente organizacional, salud mental, motivación, Hotel Ejecutivo.

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## Introduction

Over time, various theories have been proposed regarding stress. Stress has been an essential object of study due to the significant events present within a person, which significantly affect their performance and how this individual carries out some activity. Stressful labor is a factor that HE can find in the present inside most people who work excessively or find themselves in a situation where they spend most of their time worrying, which can harm their health and even make them suffer from new diseases.

Job performance is fundamental within an organization or entity, whether public or private, because it can favor or disfavor the organization's performance. Besides, it is how a person develops and performs an activity over time. "Work stress is a harmful negative factor that causes not only physical and mental damage to the mental health of employees, but also directly affects the performance of the company" (Yu et al., 2021, p. 4).

Buitrago and the (2021) define stress labor as "a disease that is dangerous and alters the psychological state of the person because it generates emotional reactions and responses, cognitive, physiological, and behavioral responses to situations with high labor demand that exceeds personal and work resources" (p. 131).

Quoting Schwepker and Dimitriou (2021), they point out that: The stress labor consists of physical and psychological factors that occur when an individual perceives that their resources are taxed. They are unable to cope successfully with the demands made upon themselves or those of their environment. Resulting in work pressures, including tension, anxiety, and fatigue. (p. 3)

Hazem (2020) indicates that "He stresses labor, which results from the interaction of the job duties and responsibilities with job specifications" (p. 17).

As the authors noted, work-related stress is influenced by employees' workload within their work facilities. Therefore, various factors produce or cause it. Furthermore, the level of stress each person experiences can be observed depending on their activities. Most workers don't realize or ignore stress, and even deny the fact that they have this condition. Therefore, those who suffer from it don't know they have a stress burden.

Citing Benjamin (1992), I point out that stress is a force that produces tension, a deformation (strain) in the object on which said force is applied; in that sense, it is an external stimulus, any agent (physical agent: noise, heat, cold... or psychological: grief, job loss...). It is the active sense of stress (p. 6).

As mentioned, stress is a mental state caused by various factors. These factors can be physical, such as noise, heat, or cold, or psychological, such as grief or job loss. This active notion of stress highlights its ability to influence and impact different aspects.

According to the Mexican Social Security Institute (IMSS, 2016), stress is the "set of physical and mental reactions that a person suffers when subjected to various external factors that exceed their capacity to cope."

As previously stated, stress refers to the physical and mental reactions we experience when faced with external circumstances that exceed our ability to cope. It can arise from work pressures, life changes, or personal difficulties and manifest in different aspects of our health if not properly managed.

Citing Houtman et al. (2008), he points out that work-related stress "is a pattern of psychological, emotional, cognitive and behavioral reactions to certain extremely overwhelming or demanding aspects in the content, organization and work environment" (p.1).

The authors emphasized that work stress is a series of psychological, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses that arise when faced with highly challenging or demanding situations related to the job's content, structure, and environment.

Likewise, BRUGES et al (2020) state that they are "harmful reactions, both physical and emotional, that occur when the demands of work exceed the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker, so that it can produce anything from a mental illness to a physical illness" (p.256).

This indicates that stress is reflected in our daily actions and is caused by internal and external factors, such as worrying about not having money or paying a debt. Stress causes people to overexert themselves, which could lead to physical illness.

The author points out that people in higher positions, also known as bosses by workers, may experience work-related stress through interests or conflicts, whether social or economic. Socially, it manifests itself in the concern that can arise from an employee's exposure to excessive pressure and workload, significantly affecting their health. Economically, they feel pressured by the high pay, reducing their productivity and making them uncompetitive in the market.

On the other hand, job performance "is actions and behaviors carried out by the workers that help to reach the achievement of the goals proposed by the company to the success of the company" (Baptist, 2020, p.114). It is also considered "the capacity that a person has to produce, do, elaborate,

end, and trigger a job in less time, with less effort and better quality, being directed to the evaluation which will result in its development” (Chagray et al., 2020, p.24).

Job performance is the “job performance and the performance displayed by an employee when performing the main functions and tasks required by their position in the specific work context” (Sumba-Bustamante et al, 2022, p. 250). “It is the quality with which an employee performs the work assigned to them by the organization” (López-Martínez et al., 2021, p. 316).

As mentioned above, job performance relates to how the person works and meets all the necessary standards requested by the company honestly and appropriately, performing their tasks and activities to the best of their ability without any complaints and creating the best impression of their authority.

Therefore, it is essential to investigate work stress because “hotel employees may experience loads of psychological stress and extreme stress due to the nature of the contact (p. (e.g., conversation with customers, touching customers’ belongings, etc.) that occurs when serving customers” (Yu et al., 2021, p. 2). Investigating work-related stress in hotels is key because it improves employees’ quality of life, increases productivity, maintains a positive image of the hotel, and reduces anxiety associated with work.

Therefore, the following scientific question arises: How does work-related stress influence the performance of employees at the Executive Hotel in Portoviejo, ¿Manabí province?.

## Methodology

According to Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza Torres (2018), research can follow quantitative, qualitative, or mixed approaches. The quantitative approach involves a sequential, structured process to test hypotheses, beginning with a defined idea and progressing through literature review and theoretical framework development. The qualitative approach, by contrast, is flexible and begins with observation and analysis of reality, aiming to build theory based on detected patterns. Mixed methods integrate both quantitative and qualitative data to provide comprehensive insights. This study adopted a quantitative approach, field-based according to Arias (2012), as data were collected directly from the reality being studied. The design was non-experimental and cross-sectional, collecting data at one point in time without manipulating variables. Its scope was descriptive-correlational, seeking to characterize variables and examine their relationships. The population comprised 12 employees

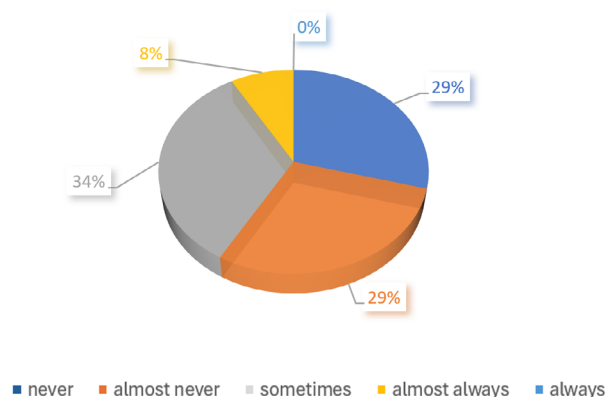
of the Executive Hotel, and since the entire population was studied, no sampling was required. Data were gathered through structured, closed-ended questionnaires, interviews, and direct observation. The questionnaire, designed to assess work stress and job performance, used a four-level scale and employed Cronbach’s alpha to evaluate reliability. The interview technique aimed to capture managerial perspectives, while direct observation analyzed the hotel’s internal environment. Methodologically, the research applied analytical, deductive, and statistical methods. The analytical method helped break down complex problems; the deductive method guided the application of general principles to specific cases; and the statistical method enabled quantification of issues, supporting evidence-based decision-making. Together, these methods facilitated a deep understanding of work-related stress and job performance within the hotel, enabling informed strategies to enhance staff well-being and organizational effectiveness.

## Results and discussion

Below, we present the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained from the survey’s application and execution.

First, we will begin by providing details through the dimensions of the variables. For variable 1, “work stress,” we have three dimensions: the physical, psychological, and company dimensions, which seek to measure stress and how it influences the company. Variable 2, “job performance,” has five dimensions: motivation, interpersonal, innovation, work-life balance, and professional development.

According to the survey conducted among all employees of the Executive Hotel, we present in Figure 1 the data obtained from the physical dimension.



**Figure 1.** Physical dimension.

We can provide the following analysis: the physical dimension of work stress was assessed through a series of in-

dicators. The assessment of the physical dimension of work stress revealed a diverse distribution of responses among participants, which indicates that:

Twenty-nine percent of respondents indicated they never experience physical symptoms of work-related stress, such as fatigue, headaches, or sleep problems. This suggests that a significant segment of the surveyed population appears less affected by the physical aspects of work-related stress.

Another 29% of participants responded that they rarely experience these physical symptoms. This figure reflects a similar proportion to those who never experience symptoms, but acknowledges the possible occasional physical symptoms of work-related stress.

Thirty-four percent of respondents indicated that they almost always experience physical symptoms of work-related stress. This is the most prevalent category, suggesting that many respondents regularly face physical manifestations of stress in their work environment.

Only 8% of participants indicated that they always experience these symptoms. Although this is the lowest proportion among all categories, its importance should not be underestimated, as it represents individuals who face constant and significant physical strain due to work-related stress.

These results highlight the importance of addressing work-related stress from a physical perspective in the workplace. The high proportion of those who regularly experience physical symptoms of work-related stress underscores the need to implement effective measures to mitigate these effects and promote a healthier and more balanced work environment.

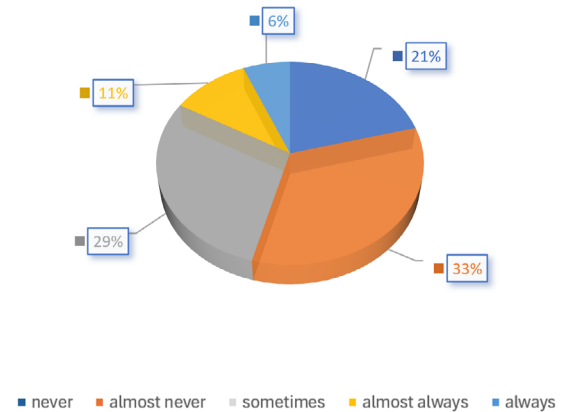
Having carefully analyzed the physical dimension of work-related stress and its effects on workers' physical well-being, it is now crucial to explore the psychological dimension better to understand this phenomenon's emotional and mental aspects. While physical symptoms are visible indicators of work-related stress, psychological symptoms can be equally impactful and, in many cases, interrelated.

Workplace stress can manifest not only in the form of fatigue or physical pain but also in anxiety, depression, and other emotional disorders. These symptoms can significantly impact employees' mental and emotional health, as well as their performance and job satisfaction.

Therefore, moving from the physical to the psychological dimension, we delve deeper into how workplace stress affects workers' mental and emotional health, highlighting the importance of addressing these aspects to promote a healthy and balanced work environment. The following image in Figure 2 presents the results obtained from the survey.

The assessment of the psychological dimension of work stress revealed the following distribution of responses among the participants: Twenty-one percent of respondents indi-

cated that they never experience psychological symptoms of work-related stress, such as anxiety or depression. This proportion suggests that a significant portion of the sample does not regularly experience these symptoms in their work environment.



**Figure 2.** Psychological dimension.

Six percent of participants responded that they rarely experience these psychological symptoms. Although this is a smaller proportion, it indicates that some individuals rarely experience psychological symptoms associated with work-related stress.

Twenty-nine percent of respondents indicated that they sometimes experience psychological symptoms of work-related stress. This category suggests a moderate presence of psychological symptoms in the surveyed population, with intermittent periods of stress.

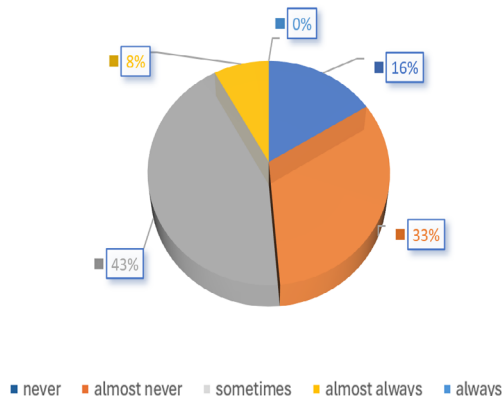
Thirty-three percent of respondents indicated that they almost always experience these psychological symptoms. This is the most prevalent category, suggesting that a significant proportion of respondents regularly face psychological symptoms of stress in their work environment.

Only 11% of respondents indicated that they always experience these symptoms. Although this is the lowest proportion among all categories, it suggests that a significant group of individuals face a constant psychological burden due to work-related stress.

These results underscore the importance of addressing work-related stress from a psychological perspective in the workplace. The significant presence of psychological symptoms of anxiety among respondents highlights the need to implement effective strategies to mitigate these effects and promote a healthier and more balanced work environment.

We now turn to the work environment dimension. This dimension examines factors such as corporate culture, workload, leadership, and organizational support that affect employee well-being. This comprehensive approach allows us to identify areas for improvement in corporate policies and

practices to reduce workplace stress and foster a work environment that promotes long-term employee well-being and performance. The following image, Figure 3, presents the results obtained from the survey.



**Figure 3.** Work environment dimension.

To conclude with the variable “work stress,” we present the results of the work environment dimension, which revealed a variety of perceptions among participants about how organizational characteristics and management policies influence work stress levels:

Sixteen percent of respondents indicated that they never experience work-related stress. This figure suggests that some organizations may have implemented adequate measures to reduce stress in their workplace, thus providing a healthier and less stressful environment for their employees.

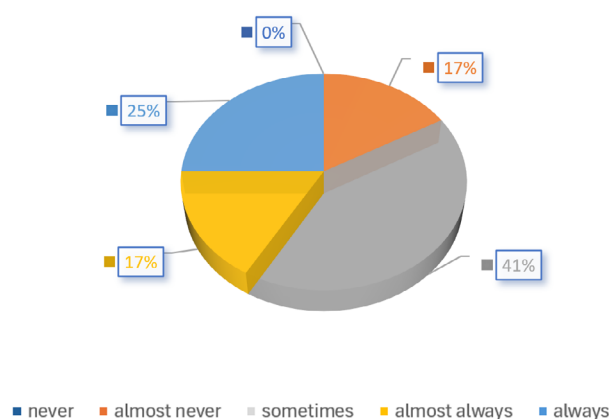
Most participants (43%) reported that they sometimes experience stress related to their work environment. This observation may indicate that organizational factors occasionally contribute to work-related stress, suggesting the need for greater attention and possible adjustments in company policies and practices.

Thirty-three percent of respondents indicated that they almost always experience company-related work-related stress. This proportion indicates significant areas of concern in management policies and organizational culture that could contribute to consistently high employee stress levels.

Only a small percentage (8%) of participants indicated that they always experience work-related stress. This finding suggests that some organizations face significant challenges in managing workplace stress, which could negatively affect employee well-being and organizational performance.

These results highlight the importance of the work environment dimension in employees’ experience of work-related stress. Identifying specific areas for improvement and developing effective strategies to address them could significantly contribute to creating a healthier and more productive work environment for all organization members.

After thoroughly analyzing the various dimensions of work stress, from its physical and psychological manifestations to its relationship with the work environment, we explore the variable of job performance. In this next research stage, we delve into motivation, an essential driving force influencing employee productivity, satisfaction, and retention. Motivation levels are intrinsically related to both emotional well-being and job performance. This section will analyze how work stress can impact employees’ motivation levels and subsequent job performance. Therefore, we will present the following analysis of the “job performance” variable, beginning primarily with the emotional dimension, which can be found in the following image (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Motivation dimension

The emotional dimension of job performance focuses on how emotional experiences impact employees’ effectiveness and well-being at work. Understanding how employees perceive the connection between their motivation and organizational climate is crucial. Here is a review and some suggestions. The analysis revealed the following distributions:

The majority of employees, 41%, state that they “Always” perceive this relationship, suggesting they see a clear and consistent link between how motivated they feel and the work environment provided by the hotel. Most employees report a consistent and positive connection between their motivation and the organizational climate. This indicates a generally motivating work environment and is a positive indicator of engagement and satisfaction.

However, 25% also responded “Rarely,” indicating that, for these employees, the connection between organizational climate and their motivation is weak or nonexistent. This could be a warning sign for hotel management to investigate and address the possible causes of this negative perception.

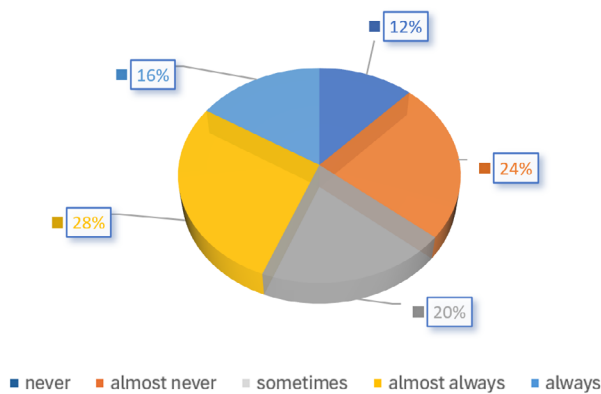
A significant segment, 17% of employees, feel there is almost always a positive connection. Although positive, there is still room for improvement in the consistency of these employees’ perceptions. On the other hand, 17% of employees



occasionally perceive the relationship between motivation and organizational climate. This suggests inconsistencies that could affect their motivation and performance.

After thoroughly investigating the emotional dimension of job performance and its impact on employees' emotional health, we moved on to the next phase of our research: the interpersonal dimension. This dimension focuses on how workplace social relationships and interpersonal dynamics influence employees' work experience.

Interactions between colleagues, supervisors, and clients can significantly impact employees' emotional well-being, job satisfaction, and overall performance. In this section, we'll analyze how these relationships can act as stressors or sources of support in the work environment, thus contributing to a more complete understanding of the various aspects of work-related stress.



**Figure 5.** Interpersonal dimension

The results of the interpersonal dimension show the following distributions, based on the data in the graph:

Approximately 17% of the group could represent employees who feel that interpersonal relationships have a minimal impact on their performance or who rarely collaborate effectively with their colleagues. This indicates a low or inconsistent perception of the effects of interpersonal relationships on their daily work.

On the other hand, 16% indicated that interpersonal relationships have a low impact on their performance or that they occasionally collaborate to achieve shared goals. This group could benefit from initiatives to improve collaboration and integration between teams.

This percentage suggests that many employees see a moderate impact of interpersonal relationships on their performance, or sometimes collaborate effectively. This significant group could benefit from strategies to strengthen interpersonal relationships and improve department cooperation.

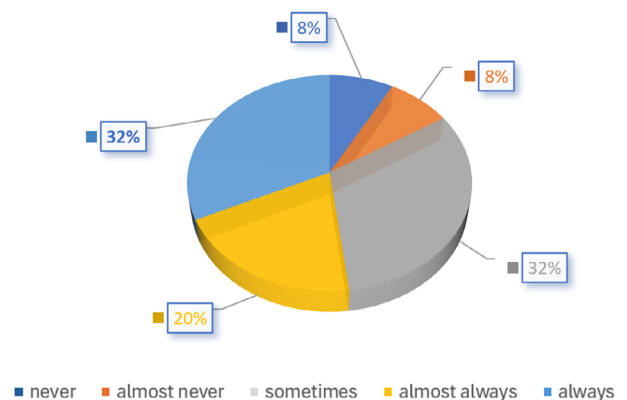
20%: This group might include employees who feel a rela-

tively positive impact of interpersonal relationships on their performance, or who frequently collaborate effectively with their colleagues. This group displays a positive perception, but there is still room to increase the consistency and depth of collaborative relationships.

28%: The largest group could indicate employees who feel a substantial positive impact of interpersonal relationships on their performance, or who consistently collaborate effectively with their colleagues. This is a positive sign of a collaborative and cohesive work environment, where interpersonal relationships are fundamental to individual and team success. The interpersonal dimension plays a crucial role in successful job performance. Healthy relationships, effective communication, and teamwork will create a positive and productive work environment.

After examining the interpersonal dimension of job performance and its influence on social dynamics within the workplace, we move on to a fundamental aspect for organizational growth and adaptation: the innovation dimension. Innovation in the workplace involves not only the generation of new ideas or products but also the ability to adapt to changes, improve existing processes, and foster an environment of creativity and continuous improvement.

In this new research phase, we will explore how innovation intertwines with other aspects of the work environment. We can identify effective strategies to foster organizational creativity and innovation, promoting excellence and sustainable growth.



**Figure 6.** Innovation dimension.

Based on the data in the graph, we can perform the following analysis of the innovation dimension:

Thirty-two percent of respondents indicated that they sometimes fail to engage with or identify with the activities or situations presented within the hotel. This could indicate the existence of barriers, a lack of interest, or understanding that impede participation or a regular experience. An-

other 32% indicated that they always encourage new ideas to improve, better manage processes, and adapt to sudden changes.

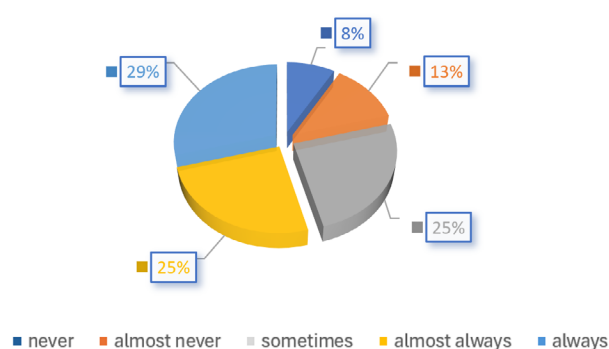
On the other hand, 20% of those surveyed indicated that they almost always contribute new ideas for developing different activities, helping to improve the processes. It should also be noted that these same people are the ones who adapt most quickly to their environment and the most sudden changes.

It is essential to point out that 8% indicate that they never or rarely like to contribute new ideas that help improve processes within the hotel, that they need more time to adapt, and that they do not usually tolerate sudden changes.

The innovation dimension is crucial to successful job performance. Fostering an environment that encourages innovation will contribute to a positive and productive work environment, thus promoting the organization's long-term growth and success.

After exploring the innovation dimension and its impact on job performance in detail, we delve into an essential aspect of employee well-being: work-life balance. This dimension addresses how effective management of time and work demands can influence employees' quality of life, as well as their job satisfaction and productivity.

In an increasingly connected and demanding world, finding the right balance between work and personal responsibilities becomes critical to employees' physical and emotional health. Therefore, in this research stage, we will explore the factors that affect work-life balance at the Executive Hotel and how these dynamics can influence employees' job satisfaction and overall performance. Furthermore, understanding the challenges and strategies for improving work-life balance can promote a healthier and more satisfying work environment for all team members. Below, we show the results in the graph in Figure 7.



**Figure 7.** Work-life dimension.

Based on the data in the graph provided, we can perform the following analysis of the work-life dimension:

A small percentage of participants, 12%, reported never experiencing work-life issues. This suggests that some employees have a healthy work-life balance, which may contribute to their overall well-being and job satisfaction.

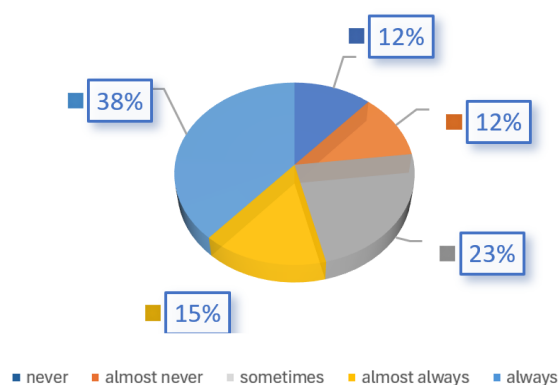
On the other hand, 4% indicated that they rarely experience work-life issues. This could suggest that some employees occasionally face challenges balancing work and personal life, affecting their quality of life and ability to perform optimally.

Nearly 20% indicated that they sometimes experience work-life issues. This suggests that challenges balancing work and personal life are common but not constant and may require time management strategies and support to manage these demands properly.

Twenty-eight percent of participants indicated that they almost always experience work-life issues. This could indicate that challenges balancing work and personal life are an integral and persistent part of their work experience, which can significantly impact their emotional and physical well-being.

Finally, 16% of respondents indicated that they constantly experience work-life issues. This suggests that challenges in balancing work and personal life are a fundamental part of daily work, leading to chronic stress and negatively affecting their health and work performance.

After analyzing work-life balance as a fundamental aspect of employee well-being, we now turn to the professional development dimension. In this stage of our research, we will explore how Hotel Ejecutivo approaches its employees' professional development, what opportunities it offers, and how these contribute to its team's personal and professional growth.



**Figure 8.** Professional development

Based on the data in the graph provided, we can perform the following analysis of the professional development di-

mension. A small percentage (12%) of participants reported never experiencing professional development situations. This suggests that some employees have fewer opportunities or incentives to develop professionally, which could affect their motivation and work engagement.

Another 23% indicated that they rarely experience professional development situations. This could suggest that some employees seldom have the opportunity to grow professionally, limiting their progress and development within the organization.

Nearly 15% of respondents indicated that they occasionally experience situations related to career development. This suggests that opportunities for career advancement are occasional, but not constant, which can lead to uncertainty and a lack of direction in employees' career paths.

Similarly, 28% of participants indicated that they almost always experience situations related to professional development. This could suggest that professional development is an integral and valued part of their work experience, possibly supported by an organizational culture that promotes growth and ongoing development.

Finally, it's significant that 32% of respondents indicate they consistently experience situations related to professional development. This suggests that professional development is a fundamental and ongoing part of their daily work, which may indicate a substantial investment by the organization in the growth and advancement of its employees.

In short, this suggests that the professional development dimension is crucial for successful job performance. Furthermore, fostering a positive environment that encourages professional development will help and contribute to a much better, more positive, and productive work environment, thus promoting the organization's long-term growth and success.

Having explored in detail the various dimensions that influence employee job performance and well-being at the Executive Hotel, it is now time to synthesize the findings and provide an overview of the two main variables: job stress and job performance. Throughout our research, each of these dimensions has provided us with a deeper understanding of the factors that affect employee health, satisfaction, and productivity in the Executive Hotel work environment.

By combining these findings, we can gain a complete picture of how stress management, fostering well-being, and promoting professional growth contribute to an organization's overall success. Through this summary, we will identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement to guide future initiatives and strategies to improve both the employee work experience and the hotel's operational effectiveness.

## Conclusions

The study shows that work-related stress directly and significantly affects the performance of Hotel Ejecutivo employees. Physical symptoms such as fatigue and headaches, along with psychological manifestations such as anxiety and depression, diminish employees' responsiveness and efficiency. This situation compromises not only their health but also the quality of service provided by the company. The organizational environment plays a significant role in generating stress. An unsympathetic corporate culture, excessive workload, and a lack of support from superiors are key factors that increase employee distress. These factors deteriorate the work environment and affect morale and interpersonal relationships within the team. Another relevant finding is that a lack of work-life balance and limited professional development contribute to emotional burnout. Employees who lack time for their well-being or opportunities to grow within the organization tend to become demotivated, which impacts their performance and commitment to work. Finally, it is concluded that it is urgent to implement strategies to reduce workplace stress. Improving the organizational climate, establishing wellness policies, offering training, and fostering effective communication can create a healthier and more productive environment. Only then will optimal performance, greater job satisfaction, and a more competitive company be guaranteed.

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### Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

### Author contributions

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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

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