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EXPLORING THE IMPACTS OF STRESS ON HOTEL INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT:

The Case of a Hotel in Tampere

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Name of Degree Programme		Abstract
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Subject	Exploring the Impact of Stress on the Management of the Hotel Industry	
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The growing concern surrounding employee stress in the hotel industry has become increasingly prominent. The demanding nature of hotel jobs has led to elevated stress levels among employees. This study aims to provide insights into employees' sources of stress, their impact on organizational performance, and coping strategies based on organizational behavior literature by delving into the factors influencing employee stress in the hotel industry.

The chosen method for data collection involves semi-structured interviews. The data was gathered through interviews with four employees of Hotamper Inn, each representing diverse roles and positions within the organization.

The findings of this study highlight two major sources of stress within Hotamper Inn and, more generally, in the hotel industry. Firstly, the analysis identifies the pervasive impact of uncertainty, revealing that employees' lack of clarity about their tasks significantly contributes to stress. This ambiguity, coupled with difficulties in decision-making, is a primary source of uncertainty. The second major cause of stress that was identified was about handling clients in challenging circumstances. Finally, the third major source of stress was about employees aiming to be perfectionists and consequently impacting other coworkers.

Some of the major suggestions for Hotamper Inn pertain to problem-focused coping strategies. This involves understanding the situation and devising ways to alleviate or minimize stress. The hotel manager could enhance team dynamics to reduce task-related stress. Similarly, emotion-focused coping strategies were also recommended to modify employees' emotional reactions to stress through words of encouragement and distraction techniques. Research suggests that both strategies are useful in reducing task-related stress and uncertainty.

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Keywords	Hotel industry management, Organizational stress factors, Stress coping strategies.
Pages	39 pages and appendices 2 pages

Content

Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

Appendix 2. Plan for data management

1   Introduction

Global stress levels have surged after the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is causing tremendous anxiety and tension among hotel staff members who find it difficult to perform their jobs. This thesis was prompted to examine how the pandemic affected occupational stressors and their effects because of the serious situation of rising occupational stress brought on by the negative effects of the pandemic on all hotel employees, from frontline staff to management. This research considered stress, a person's physiological or psychological reaction to exceptional circumstances, as a typical and necessary aspect of existence (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980; Selye, 1976).

Because of how heavily stress plays a role in the development of diseases, people can mistakenly believe that stress is not as detrimental to health as it is. For instance, stress routinely tops people's lists of hazards for coronary heart disease, surpassing the relevance of smoking and high blood pressure, according to surveys of the public (Lehrer & Woolfolk, 2021). Additionally, stress is cited as a cause of cancer more commonly than tobacco use (Lehrer & Woolfolk, 2021, p.10). According to the Health Organization (2019), burnout results from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. Burnout is characterized by energy depletion and exhaustion, feeling negative about one's job increased mental distance from the job, and reduced professional efficacy.

Since stress has detrimental health effects, it also impacts organizational productivity. Therefore, the escalating concern for many organizations revolves around the rising prominence of stress and work-related stress. This issue has gained prominence due to its far-reaching impacts, not only on performance and productivity but also on mental well-being, potentially leading to conditions like depression and anxiety. According to (Klainin 2009; Umanodan et al 2009; Leung et al 2011; and Downey et al 2012), numerous studies have recognized that heightened stress levels and the ensuing negative emotional responses can result in various adverse outcomes, containing physical health issues, particularly mental health problems, and chronic illnesses, as well as a diminished quality of life (Biding. C, Nordin. R. B. 2014, p.339). Similarly, stress can exert substantial detrimental effects on performance, productivity, and job satisfaction due to reduced motivation, absenteeism, and burnout (Biding & Nordin, 2014, p.339).

While stress cannot be entirely eradicated, there are strategies for managing it, and individuals can acquire skills to effectively cope with stress. The popularity of stress

management programs in workplace settings has experienced significant growth both domestically and internationally, as evidenced by Richardson and Rothstein in 2008 (as cited in Biding & Nordin, 2014, p.340).

As part of this study, aiming to understand the stressors prevalent in the hotel industry, the next sections present the scenarios of stress in the hotel industry, the research questions that need to be answered to understand them, and the objectives that the study is trying to reach.

1.1 Commissioning Company

This was carried out at a company referred to as 'Hotamper Inn' (a pseudonym employed for confidentiality). Situated close to downtown in the Tampere region, Hotamper Inn accommodates customers attending various festivals, events, and performances on a weekly basis. The large number of guests during these events can create stress for the staff, arising from the fluctuations in the hotel industry and the unpredictable nature of Hotamper Inn's operations. Therefore, to investigate these challenges and their impact on staff well-being, this thesis aims to understand the specific stressors encountered by the staff in the hotel industry.

1.2 Research Question

Workplace stress is a common and complex phenomenon in every industry that incurs financial costs for organizations (Lazarus, 1993). Because employees frequently face competing expectations from the business, their managers, and their customers, work stress can be a particular issue in customer-oriented sectors (Ruyter et al., 2001 as cited in O'Neill, and Davis, K, 201, p.1). Work stress has been regarded as one of the major difficulties for management in the hotels as among other things, it has an impact on the performance of all employee levels, including managers and salaried staff members. According to a recent study, employee stress in hotels is crucial because it can make employees worn out and pessimistic, both of which can have negative effects on service performance (O'Neill, and Davis, K. 201, p.2). Therefore, organizations in the hotel sector would benefit from examining the sources of stress and finding effective ways to manage and regulate it. Transforming stress into a strength can be advantageous for the business, especially during times of crisis.

Given that stress is an unavoidable challenge in the hotel industry, it is essential to possess the knowledge required to identify stressors and control stress levels in the working environment. To gain a deeper understanding of this subject, the following research question has been developed. This question will guide the study investigation and support in achieving the objectives. This thesis explores the stressors, the role of stress, and the impact of stress in the workplace on customers from the customer's perspective. The primary question to be examined in this thesis is as follows:

RQ: What are the main causes of stress for employees at Hotel Hotamper Inn and how can they be mitigated?

1.3   Research Objectives

The thesis aims to achieve several objectives. Firstly, it aims to gather information about organizational stress. The focus is on presenting detailed insights into the specific stressors prevalent in the hotel sector. The study also aims to look at offenders who create stress and how they influence employee behavior in turn organizational behavior dynamics are impacted. Furthermore, it is then important to identify effective stress management strategies within the hotel industry and make suggestions to Hotamper Inn to cope with employee stress.

2   Theoretical framework

To understand stress in the hotel industry, the following sections present a review of the literature on organizational behavior and present a conceptualization of stress at the individual level along with the sources of stress. Once the sources are understood, it becomes important to also understand techniques for adapting to and coping with stress. The influence of personal stress on organizational performance can only then be assessed. The following sections present these aspects following the literature in the field.

2.1   Conceptualizing Stress in Organizations

Leading supplier of employee assistance programs (EAPs), Harris, Rothenberg International, reports that more employees than ever are experiencing mental health crises and require professional treatment. Indeed, a significant cause of stress in the lives of most people is jobs. Stress is a dynamic state that arises when a person encounters a demand, opportunity, or resource that is relevant to their desires but for which they believe the outcome is both significant and unknown. This definition is not simple (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 659).

Stress serves a beneficial role even though it is usually discussed in a negative light. The brain, pituitary, adrenal glands, and neurological system release stress hormones to help us deal with stress. Our muscles tighten in preparation for action, and our breathing, and heart rate quicken to boost oxygen intake. Stress has the potential to be advantageous at this moment. Take into consideration, for instance, the exceptional performance a stage actor or athlete delivers in a clutch" scenario. These people frequently turn stress into an opportunity to rise to the situation and provide their best effort. In a similar vein, a lot of professionals view the stress of deadlines and heavy workloads as constructive challenges that improve the caliber of their work and their sense of fulfillment in their careers. On the other hand, in adverse circumstances, stress is detrimental and can impede advancement by raising blood pressure and causing an irregular heartbeat while people find it difficult to communicate and reason rationally (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 659).

These various psychological stress states are likely caused by various antecedent circumstances, both in the environment and inside the individual, and have various outcomes. The threat, for instance, is an unpleasant mental state that can substantially obstruct brain functions and hamper efficiency, whereas the challenge is thrilling and linked

to expanded, frequently exceptional performance. If people take these differences seriously, stress cannot be understood in terms of a single dimension like activation. As will be seen below, such recognition entails taking into account a variety of emotions, some of which are negative and others of which are favorable (Lazarus,1993, p. 5).

2.1.1 Stress at the Individual Level

At the individual level, stress is a psychological and physiological response to perceived threats, problems, or demands that are higher than a person's evaluated capacity for effective coping, according to Selye (1956). As it is commonly recognized, the "fight or flight" reaction aids individuals in anticipating and responding to potentially dangerous situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Numerous factors, including tension at work, interpersonal disputes, monetary difficulties, health problems, and environmental stressors, can lead to stress (American Psychological Association, 2020).

It is important to remember that stress isn't always a negative thing; in moderation, it can also motivate individuals and boost productivity. Stress is the body's natural response to external demands or challenges, which can be physical, emotional, or psychological (Smith et al., 2017). While stress can be beneficial in small doses, chronic stress can have detrimental effects on an individual's physical and mental health. In the workplace, stress can be triggered by a multitude of factors, some of which are intrinsic to the individual, while others are external to them. These factors can interact in complex ways, making it essential to understand the root causes of workplace stress.

People can experience stress in a variety of ways, and it can take many different forms (Selye, 1956). At the individual level, stress can manifest itself in a variety of ways and is influenced by both internal and external factors (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). To promote mental and physical health, as well as to develop efficient coping mechanisms and strategies to decrease its harmful effects, it is crucial to detect stress at the individual level (American Psychological Association, 2020).

To understand and detect stress at the individual level, it is crucial to gain insight into the underlying sources of stress.

2.2 Sources of Stress

According to the Organizational Behaviour literature review, the sources of stress can be broadly categorized into three themes, Environmental factors, Organizational factors, and Personal Factors. The following sections present these aspects (also refer to figure1):

2.2.1 Environmental Factors

Environmental uncertainty not only shapes the structure of an organization but also significantly impacts the stress levels experienced by its employees. Uncertainty stands as the primary obstacle that people encounter when dealing with shifts within an organization. There are three principal categories of environmental uncertainty: *economic, political, and technological uncertainty*.

Economic uncertainties: emerge with changes in the business cycle. For instance, during economic contractions, individuals tend to become increasingly anxious about the security of their job's employees (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 662).

Political uncertainties: while generally less stress-inducing in North America compared to regions like Haiti or Venezuela can still contribute to employee stress in all countries. This difference is primarily attributed to the more stable and orderly political systems found in the United States and Canada employees (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 662).

Technological advancements: technological advancements present an additional challenge for individuals in the workforce as they have the potential to swiftly render an employee's skills and experience obsolete. Staying current with new computer programs, robotics, automation, and similar technological shifts poses an ongoing challenge that can induce stress among many employees (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 662).

2.2.2 Organizational Factors

According to Cooper and Marshal's (1976) job stress model, several factors, including the inherent job demands, one's role within the organization, career development, organizational structure and culture, and workplace relationships, collectively contribute to work-related stress within an organization.

Previous research has indicated that community health workers commonly experience significant work-related stress due to inadequate skills and excessive workloads. The findings revealed that the aspect of stress related to wages and benefits was rated as the most significant, followed by the stress associated with work tasks and roles. Likewise, earlier research on work-related stress had identified low salaries, heavy workloads, and limited opportunities for advancement as the most frequently mentioned sources of stress in the workplace. Several factors may have contributed to these observations. These relatively low salaries for community health workers amplified their stress related to wages and benefits (Sun et al., 2014, p. 3-6). A variety of factors within a company can contribute to stress. A demanding and insensitive supervisor, unfriendly co-workers, work overload, and pressure to prevent mistakes or finish duties in a short amount of time are a few examples. These elements have been divided into groups based on task, role, and customer-related factors. Job-related tasks are required of a person. These consist of the physical work arrangement, working circumstances, and job design, which includes task diversity, automation, and autonomy (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 662).

The following are some of the common factors for organizational and work-related stressors:

Task-related factors: the amount of work that needs to be done is the single factor that is most consistently linked to workplace stress, closely followed by the existence of impending deadlines. Stress and anxiety might also rise when working in a crowded space or in an area that is visible and noisy all the time. We talked about how emotional labor leads to stress (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 662). Workplace Factors: work-related factors constitute a significant source of stress for employees (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). For example, job-related demand. High job demands, including excessive workload, tight deadlines, and constant pressure to perform, are often associated with increased stress levels. When employees perceive that their job demands exceed their capacity to cope, they are at risk of experiencing chronic stress, which can lead to burnout and various health problems.

Role-related factors: role demands are the kinds of pressures that an individual faces because of the specific role that they play within an organization. The expectations that come from coworkers are known as interpersonal demands. While certain demands are reasonable, a growing body of research shows that stressful work settings are very closely linked to unfavorable behaviors from co-workers and managers, including fighting, bullying, impolite behavior, racial discrimination, and sexual harassment. (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 663).

Employees' perceptions of their roles within an organization also influence their stress levels (Kahn et al., 1964). Role ambiguity, where employees are unsure about their responsibilities, and role conflict, where they experience conflicting demands from different sources, can be highly stressful. Clear job descriptions and effective communication can help alleviate these stressors.

Customer-related factors: Abusive customers, a growing volume of studies indicate that a variety of service-related professions may frequently experience customer abuse. Because it seriously damages service personnel, customer abuse is also important. Numerous research studies have documented the distress experienced by service personnel due to consumer mistreatment. Servicing employees find it extremely difficult to take abuse personally. It is expected of service employees to bring their inner own to work in stressful positions. It is therefore quite difficult for the employees to disconnect themselves from the mistreatment they receive from clients. The factors behind abusive customers have been identified as weak labor power, a weak status shield for service personnel, and a lack of rooted relationships between service workers and customers. (Korczynski & Evans, 2022, p. 770-772).

Organizational Culture: the culture of an organization can either mitigate or exacerbate stress levels among its employees. A positive organizational culture that values work-life balance, employee well-being, and open communication can reduce stress. In contrast, a toxic work environment characterized by high levels of conflict, unrealistic expectations, and a lack of support can significantly contribute to stress (Chen & Cooper, 2014).

Organization Change: changes in an organization can be stressful since they can be viewed as threatening by certain personnel. These workers have a higher likelihood of quitting, in part because of their stress. Employee impression of the organizational changes must be seen as fair to lessen the sense of threat. According to research, people are less likely to view changes as unfair or dangerous if they have a positive change orientation before the changes are planned. Anxiety can also be Increased by having a lot of work to do in a short amount of time, working in extremely packed offices, or being in an environment with frequent interruptions and noise. (Robbins et al., 2017).

2.2.3 Personal Factors

Individual Traits Factors: one of the primary individual factors influencing stress levels is an individual's personality traits. Research has shown that certain personality traits, such as

neuroticism and perfectionism, are associated with higher susceptibility to stress. Individuals with neurotic tendencies may perceive situations as more stressful than their peers, even when the objective stressors are similar. Moreover, perfectionists tend to set exceedingly high standards for themselves, which can lead to stress when they perceive they are falling short of these standards (Smith et al., 2017).

Another personality trait linked to stress levels is workaholism. People who are workaholics are obsessive about their work; they work long hours, think about it when they're not working, and take on extra tasks to state their inner need to work more. They may appear to be the perfect staff in certain aspects. That's undoubtedly the reason why most individuals automatically respond, "I just work too hard" when asked what their worst shortcoming is during interviews. There is a distinction between working hard and obsessively. Despite their intense efforts, workaholics are not always more productive than other employees. Over time, the strain of putting "n so much effort at w" work pulls on an individual, increasing degrees of psychological burnout and work-life conflict (Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A., 2017, p. 664).

Therefore, Individual stress levels within the workplace are influenced by a complex interplay of individual and workplace factors (Smith et al., 2017). While personality traits and coping strategies contribute to an individual's susceptibility to stress, job demands, organizational culture, and role-related factors play crucial roles in exacerbating or mitigating workplace stress. Employers and employees alike must recognize the significance of these factors to promote a healthier and more productive work environment. By addressing these factors and implementing stress-reduction strategies, organizations can support their employees in managing and reducing workplace stress. Therefore, stress is a complex and often unavoidable part of human life, and it can originate from a multitude of factors, stemming from both internal and external sources. These stressors can significantly impact an individual's emotional and physical well-being.

The average person might put in 40 to 50 hours a week at work. However, people's experiences and issues from the other 120+ hours can carry over into their work. The last group of personal elements that can cause stress at work consists of family and financial concerns for the employee. People value their relationships with family and friends. Even positive family dynamics can lead to stress that has a substantial negative influence on people. Work-life conflict is frequently strongly associated with family concerns. Some people manage their money poorly or have wants that are above their means, regardless of their salary level. Even those who earn $100,000 tend to struggle as much with money

management as those who just make $20,000. However, new studies show that individuals making less than $50,000 per year face higher levels of stress (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 664).

Respect Factors: in the workplace is also essential to creating a calm and effective work environment. Porath and Pearson's research (2013, pp. 114–121) indicates that when workers feel valued, they are more engaged, content, and dedicated to their jobs. Respect is a two-way street that involves management and coworkers.

Figure 1: illustrates sources of stress at three levels.
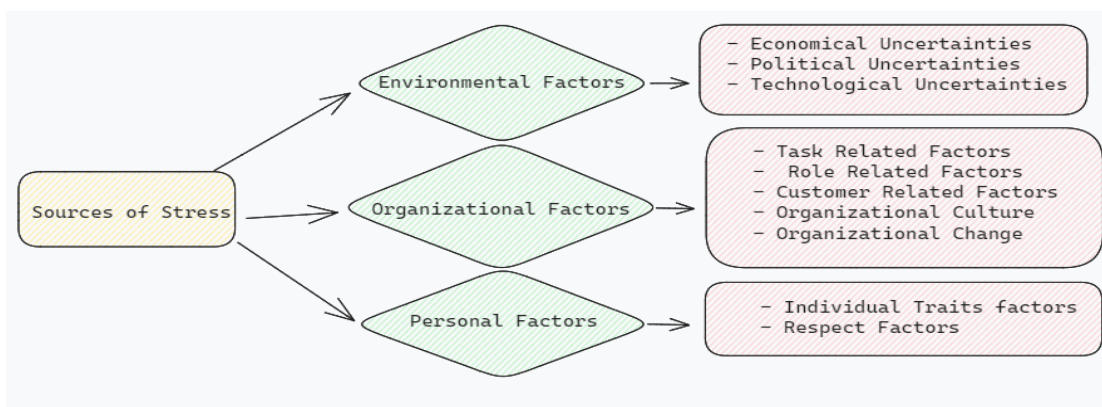
2.2.4   Stressors are Additive

It is easy to overlook that stress is an additive phenomenon—it accumulates up—when we examine stressors separately. An individual's stress level increases with each new and ongoing stressor. Thus, while a single stressor might not seem like much in and of itself, it might be too much when combined with an already elevated stress level. People of an organization must add up all the stressors and levels of severity associated with a person to determine how much stress they are under overall. Managers should continue to be mindful of the possible stress loads from organizational issues, as this is difficult to measure or detect. Many workers are open to discussing their perceived workload with supportive management (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 663).

2.3 Impact of Stress on Organisational Performance

Literature suggests that the foremost consideration when examining stress within an organization and its impact on performance is the stress associated with work-related factors.

Work-related stressors refer to environmental factors within organizations that impose excessive demands on individuals, as exemplified by studies like Cullen et al. (1985). Common stressors include situations like role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload. It is worth noting that workplace aggression also falls into the category of stressors, as pointed out by Hershcovis and Barling (2010). The reason behind this is that employees who are targeted by such aggression have to invest a significant amount of mental energy in coping with unnecessary behaviors, depleting their mental resources and adversely affecting their well-being. Actions like ostracism, which involve excluding, rejecting, or ignoring employees, impose an excessive burden on workers, hindering their ability to establish or maintain positive interpersonal relationships, achieve success in their work-related endeavors, or maintain a favorable reputation within their workplace (Hitlan et al., 2006, p. 217).

It is becoming more and more common to worry about working stress. Heavy workloads, rushed deadlines, job uncertainty, and disagreements with coworkers are common stressors that employees must deal with. Over 80% of employees report feeling stressed out at work, according to the American Institute of Stress. Workplace stress is said to cause billions of dollars in lost productivity each year ("Workplace Stress", 2021).

Existing research has identified heavy workloads, inadequate resources, strained work relationships, a lack of professional respect, and limited promotion opportunities as potentially the most significant sources of work stress for community health workers. Prolonged stress can have adverse effects on both the well-being of employees and the functioning of community health service centers, leading to employee dissatisfaction, burnout, below-average performance, or intentions to leave their jobs. Therefore, it is imperative to take steps to alleviate work-related stress. Work motivation, defined as an individual's willingness to exert and sustain the effort to achieve organizational objectives, reflects the interplay between employees and their work environments (Sun et al, 2014, p. 3-4).

According to organizational behavior literature, the impact of stress on organizational performance can be broadly categorized into the following themes (also refer to Figure 2):

2.3.1   The Impact of Stress on Individual level

Heavy workloads, rushed deadlines, interpersonal problems, and job uncertainty are just a few of the factors that can cause stress in workers at the individual level. Chronic stress can impair job satisfaction, increase absenteeism, and raise turnover rates if it is not controlled (Quick et al., 1997, p. 143). Additionally, it may lead to problems with physical and mental health, which would further impair worker performance.

The Impact on Reduced Productivity: Stressed employees are often less productive. The constant strain and pressure can lead to decreased focus, impaired decision-making, and slower task completion (Kahn et al., 1964, p. 32). In this context, productivity loss is not merely a personal issue but has far-reaching implications for the entire organization (Quick et al., 1997, p. 143).

Negative Impact on Employee Well-being: Employees may experience physical and mental health problems as a result of ongoing working stress. Anxiety and depression are two mental health conditions that can lead to increased healthcare costs and poor general employee well-being (Quick et al., 1997, p. 74).

Impaired Creativity and Innovation: A stressed-out workforce is less likely to innovate and solve problems creatively. Stress tends to limit a person's attention to immediate issues, making it more difficult for them to think strategically and adjust to shifting situations (Sonnentag & Frese, 2013, p. 578).

The subject of job-related stress has gained escalating interest within the research sphere. In broad contexts, job stress pertains to sensations of immense challenge, unease, strain, frustration, instability, and apprehension that stem from job requirements (Bhui et al., 2016). A considerable portion of the studies centered around workplace stress has emphasized the adverse psychological and physical consequences for workers (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010; Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992, as cited in Bani-Melhem.S et al 2020, p.5).

Recently, researchers have started to focus more on how employees handle the negative emotions that arise from challenging work conditions (Lawrence et al., 2011, as cited in Haver. A. et al 2019, p.2). Because work-related stress is categorized as a job requirement, it is generally believed that it could hurt creative thinking and the inclination to generate new ideas. Accordingly, this can be explained by the way employees respond to stress, which

typically triggers a process of intense cognitive adaptation that drains their available energy reserves (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, as cited Bani-Melhem.S et al 2020, p. 5). The impact of stress can be seen also in arousing negative emotions in employees. Consequently, it has a negative impact on organizational performance.

2.3.2 The Impact of Stress on Organizational Level

Within an organization, stress can take many different forms, and it has a wide range of negative repercussions. There are various distinct categories into which the effects of stress on organizational performance can be divided, as is done here.

Employee stress has effects that go beyond personal hardship. Stress-related problems are a major problem for organizations as well. According to Sonnentag and Frese (2013, p. 570), high levels of stress might decrease productivity, impair decision-making, and increase errors. Employees are less likely to engage in innovative thinking and creative problem-solving in a stressful work environment, which limits the organization's capacity to change and remain competitive.

Absenteeism and turnover are frequently attributed to stress. High-stress levels among employees increase the likelihood that they will use sick time, which raises absenteeism rates. Additionally, they might eventually leave the company in search of a place to work that is less stressful, which would lead to a greater turnover rate (Quick et al., 1997, p. 143).

Figure 2: Illustrates the impact of stress on three Levels of Organizational Performance.
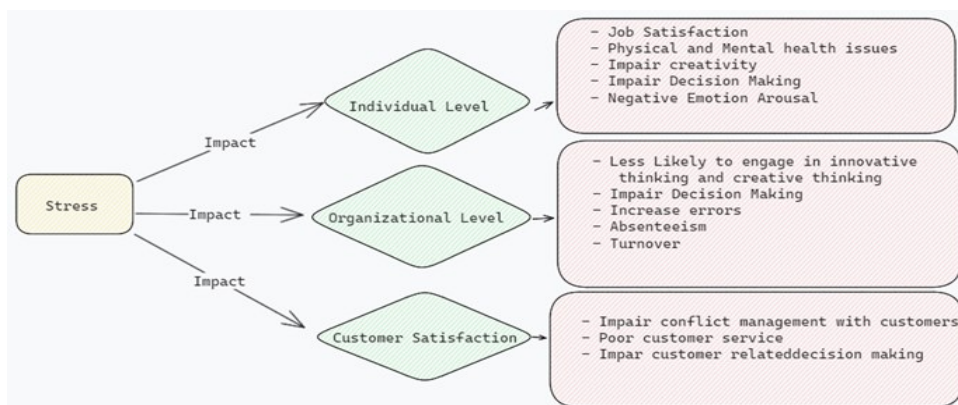
2.3.3   The Impacts of Stress on Customer Satisfactory

Businesses must manage workplace stressors, as unhappy workers can hurt both clients and sales. It is crucial to understand and mitigate the consequences of stress on workers because it can result in lower productivity, higher absenteeism, and poor customer service. Stress among employees incurs a financial cost, as evidenced by figures showing significant losses for businesses. The article suggests that to avoid these unfavorable effects, managers and leaders should actively manage stress, identify early indicators of stress in workers, and address the underlying causes. It is also critical to support employees with personal and conflict difficulties to foster a healthy work environment (Newman, 2016). To manage these challenges, the first step would be recognizing the sources of stress.

2.4   Coping Mechanism

Consequently, as workplace stress demands individuals to employ coping strategies that consume significant energy, they will limit their activities to those they can manage with their available resources (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004, as cited in Bani-Melhem.S et al., 2020, p. 5). This results in reduced willingness and capacity for innovation. This demonstrates that an increase in job satisfaction leads to a reduction in work-related stress.

To address elevated stress levels among employees, managers can play a pivotal role. Drawing from the study's findings, the hotel sector can implement measures to enhance the well-being of its staff. Human resource approaches within the hotel industry could be adapted to reorganize work structures and provide enhanced organizational support for employees. Moreover, organizing workshops focused on Emotional Intelligence holds promise for hotel staff, empowering them to develop emotional management skills and gain insight into customer emotions (Ekta Rao, Alok Goel 2017, p. 3).

This finding aligns with Zehle's (2009) research, which suggests that job satisfaction can alleviate work-related stress, with structural conditions being the primary source of job-related stress (Riyadi, S, 2019, p. 96).

The following themes have been developed based on organizational behavior literature (also refer to Figure 3)

2.4.1 Coping Strategies

How individuals cope with stress also plays a pivotal role in determining their stress levels (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). While some individuals may employ adaptive coping mechanisms, such as problem-solving and seeking social support, others may resort to maladaptive strategies like avoidance and substance abuse. The choice of coping strategies can significantly impact an individual's stress resilience. Consequently, employees who lack effective coping mechanisms may experience heightened stress in the workplace.

Coping is the process of managing, lowering, or limiting stressors. Below, there are two types of coping strategies to lessen the stress levels in the organizational environment (Neck et Al., 2017, p. 235).

• *Problem-focused coping*: This style of coping looks for workable solutions to problems by trying to comprehend the issue at hand. The goal is to lessen or eliminate stress.

• *Emotion-focused coping*: This style is an attempt to use distracting strategies and encouraging words to try to alter a person's emotional response to a stressor.

Employees who experience stress at work frequently choose problem-focused coping, which involves confronting the issues head-on to get rid of or lessen the stressors. Recent studies, however, indicate that emotion-focused coping techniques might be highly helpful in supporting workers in maintaining their current task-performance levels. Emotion-focused coping techniques including bringing out, mental and behavioral disengagement and denial may be useful short-term solutions for handling distinct emotions like joy, remorse, or rage (Neck et Al., 2017, p. 235).

To demonstrate a strong positive correlation between emotion-focused coping strategies and task performance, the study showed that individuals with higher emotional intelligence scores were more likely than those with lower emotional intelligence scores to select emotion-focused coping strategies in reaction to feelings of joy, guilt, or rage (Neck et Al., 2017, p. 235).

To mitigate the negative consequences of stress, one must acquire effective coping strategies. These strategies include mindfulness and relaxation techniques, such as meditation, deep breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation. These techniques are designed to promote relaxation and reduce physiological arousal, thereby aiding individuals

in managing stress (American Psychological Association, 2020). Regular exercise is another valuable approach to releasing endorphins, which can elevate mood and reduce stress. Additionally, exercise contributes to overall physical health (Selye, 1956).

- Social Support: talking about worries with loved ones, friends, or a therapist can offer emotional relief and useful guidance (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

- Time management: according to the American Psychological Association (2020), effective time management and prioritization help lessen stress caused by work and daily obligations.

- Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT): according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), CBT aids in the identification and reframing of unhelpful thought processes as well as the development of healthy modes of thinking and coping.

- Seeking expert Assistance: consulting a mental health expert is essential when dealing with persistent or extreme stress. According to the American Psychological Association (2020), therapy or medication may be suggested.

Individual-level stress is a complicated and varied phenomenon that has an impact on many different areas of a person's life. It is critical to understand that stress is a normal reaction but that it can become troublesome if it persists or becomes too much.

People need to comprehend the causes, impacts, and coping techniques of stress if they are to retain their bodily and emotional well-being. Effective stress management techniques can help people live healthier, more resilient lives.

2.4.2 The Role of Leadership

An organization's leadership is crucial to controlling stress and its effects on performance. Teams can experience less stress when their leaders encourage open communication, offer support, and establish a healthy work atmosphere (Yukl, 2013, p. 82). They can also put into place policies and initiatives that support a healthy work-life balance, stress reduction, and employee wellbeing.

Several techniques can be implemented by organizations to lessen the detrimental impact of stress on performance. For people dealing with stress-related problems, employee assistance programs (EAPs) can be a great source of support (Murphy & Shirom, 2001, p. 17). Employees can benefit from training programs that emphasize stress management, resilience development, and emotional intelligence.

2.4.3   Employee compensation

The causality test outcome indicates that employee performance is positively and significantly affected by compensation. An increase in employee compensation leads to an enhancement in their performance. This finding aligns with the research of (Zehlen, 2009; Riyadi, 2019, pp. 96-103) (Zehlen, 2009) and (Riyadi, 2019, pp. 96–103) offer insightful analyses of the compensation field. Zehlen's research explores compensation systems, analyzing tactics and implications (2009). However, Riyadi's work (2019) focuses on pay practices in particular and provides a thorough investigation of the variables affecting compensation decisions as well as their effects on organizational dynamics (pp. 96–103). When taken as a whole, these resources add to a thorough knowledge of issues about remuneration within the framework of organizational management (Haynes & Fryer, 1999, as cited in Ekta Rao, Alok Goel 2017, p.2).

2.4.4   Social Assistance

Collegial links with supervisors or coworkers can provide social support and mitigate the negative effects of stress. Even high-strain occupations have a calmative impact when it comes to social support (Robbins, S. P., & Judge, T. A., 2017, p. 664).

Promoting a Supportive Culture: stress can be reduced by fostering a work environment that values employee well-being, promotes open communication, and provides support networks (Yukl, 2013, p. 217).

Implementing Stress Management Programs: By providing employees with appropriate coping methods and tactics, organizations might offer stress management programs and tools.

Flexible Work Arrangements: offering flexible work schedules and telecommuting opportunities can help employees better manage their personal and professional lives while also lowering stress (Chen & Cooper, 2014, p. 382).

Figure 3: illustrates the Coping mechanism, Coping strategies, and role of Management.
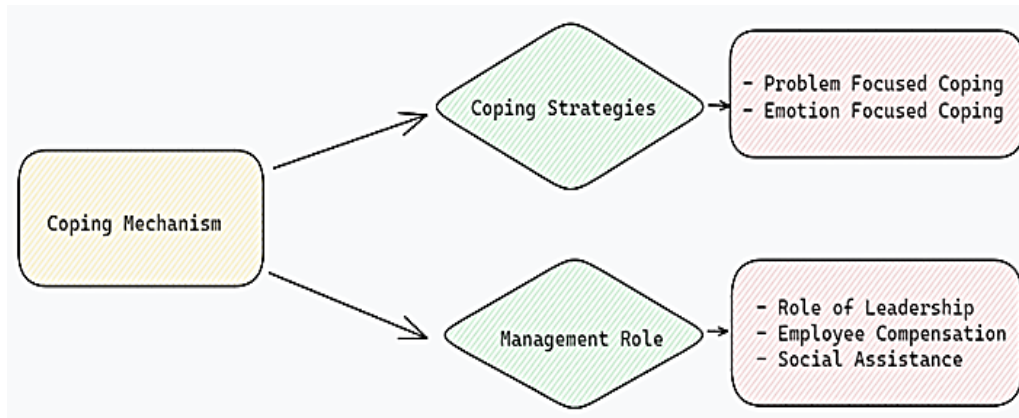
2.5   Different forms of workplace aggression and distress

In addition, workplace aggression can manifest in various forms: physical or verbal, active or passive, and direct or indirect. Physical aggression involves actions like physical assault, pushing, unwanted touching, or the use of weapons to cause bodily harm, whereas verbal aggression involves the use of hurtful words or non-physical acts (Caillier. J. G., 2020, p. 3). Active aggression involves engaging in harmful behaviors, while passive aggression inflicts harm by withholding actions, such as not providing necessary resources for a person to perform their job effectively. Direct aggression occurs when the perpetrator directly harms the target, like yelling at them face-to-face, while indirect aggression involves using intermediaries or targeting something of value, such as spreading false rumors about the target when they are not present (Caillier. J.G., 2020, p. 3).

2.6   Theoretical Summary and Framework

The theoretical section comprehensively addresses Sources of stress (refer to Figure 1), the impact of stress on individual and organizational levels, and customer satisfaction (refer to Figure 2), strategies for coping with reducing workplace stress (refer to Figure 3), and the consequences arising from fluctuating stress levels in the workplace. Furthermore, an in-depth exploration of stress research includes various dimensions, including the physical, environmental, and individual aspects, as well as external factors. Following the aforementioned theoretical insights, this thesis examines diverse forms of workplace stress as suggested by reviewed literature.

Following the categorization of the stressors, the author will offer suggestions for mitigating stress at the individual and organizational levels based on the theories presented and the causes of stress. The strategies that can take the coping mechanism a step further have been mentioned. Later when the Stress sources of the case study are analyzed, this study will offer them coping strategies based on the sources of the stress and the types of it (refer to Figure 3).

The following theoretical framework (refer to figure 4) has been developed by the author of this thesis to examine the case company's sources of stress and impact on organizational performance so that coping strategies can be suggested as a suggestion of this thesis.

Figure 4: Illustrates Theoretical Framework on Sources of Stress, Impact on Organizational Performance and Coping Mechanisms.
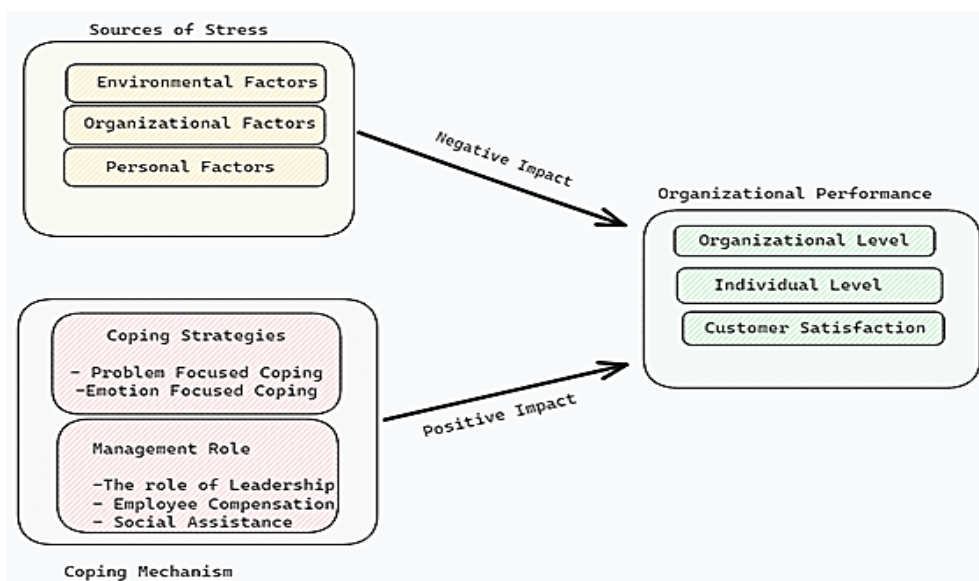
3   Methodology

This thesis aims to collect data on workplace stress at the case study company Hotamper Inn to identify stressors and to understand how those stressors influence Hotamper Inn employee behaviors so that stress management techniques, and stress and coping techniques that affect organizational performance can be suggested. To conduct this study, the author further justifies methodological choices and the case study adopted in the process of following research onion framework by Saunders et al. (2016) was used to make methodological choices (refer to figure 5).

Research Onion: The adopted research onion serves as a roadmap for developing, carrying out, and interpreting research. It was first conceptualized by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) in their seminal work "Research Methods for Business Students." To help researchers manage the intricacies of empirical investigation, a metaphorical "onion" with numerous layers, each representing a different part of the research process, has been developed (Saunders et al., 2016). Particularly in business studies, this model has evolved into a crucial tool for academics from many different fields.

At its core, the research onion consists of key layers, each building upon the previous one. Following are the methodological choices the author of this thesis has adopted with the reasoning:

Research Philosophy: The research philosophical perspective is the top layer of the research onion. The nature of reality, the nature of knowledge, and the purpose of the researcher are all topics covered in this layer. Researchers' research approaches and methodologies can be shaped by selecting positivist, interpretivist, or pragmatist ideologies (Saunders et al., 2016). The author conducts this study as an interpretivist because this acknowledges the subjective nature of reality and emphasizes the importance of understanding and interpreting the meanings people attach to their experiences. By adopting this, the author aims to explore the phenomena through qualitative methods, focusing on the perspectives and interpretations of individuals in their natural context.

Research Approach: There are two main types of research approaches suggested by Saunders et al. (2016). Deductive and inductive research are both choices offered in the choice layer of the research onion. This is an essential but important decision that researchers must make when organizing their research; generally, the deductive choice implies the use of a quantitative method or operations, whereas the inductive choice results

in the use of a qualitative approach or methods. Combinative research designs that integrate both are possible as an abductive approach.

This thesis uses an inductive approach as the research process is qualitative and focuses on interviews conducted by the author. The other reason for this study being inductive is that it starts with research questions and objectives that are to be answered.

Research Strategy: The Research strategy depends on what researchers choose to conduct experiments, surveys, case studies, ethnographies, or other types of study. This layer of research onion aids in defining the technique and framework of the research (Saunders et al., 2016). Taking Saunders et al. (2016) into consideration, this thesis uses a case study research strategy because the author aims to explore a case study company.

Time Horizon: The fifth layer of the research onion addresses considerations related to the study's data collection time framework, distinguishing between two types: cross-sectional and longitudinal data collection. Researchers choose whether their study covers a shorter period or a longer one (Saunders et al., 2016). The author uses cross-sectional for this study because cross-sectional investigations are carried out all at once or in a relatively brief amount of time.

This method does not involve tracking participants over an extended period; instead, researchers gather data from them at a specific moment in time for example interviewing them. Therefore, this thesis uses interviews as a data collection method. This demands fewer resources and time yet provides sufficient information for the intended analysis in this context.

Figure 5: illustrates the methodological choices the author made in this study.
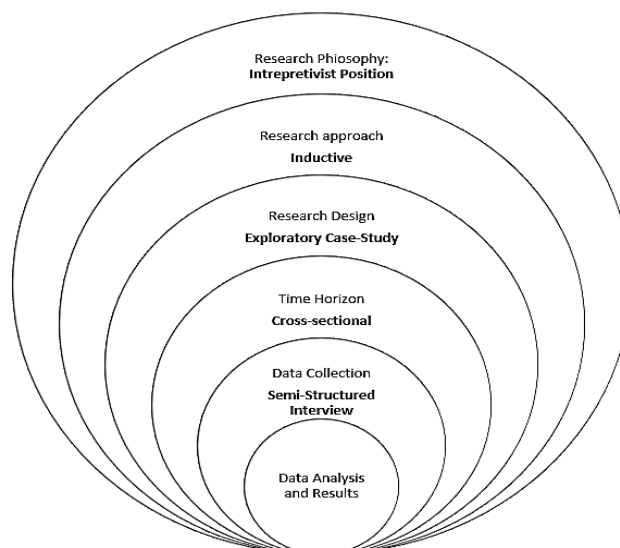
Data Collection: The author of this thesis conducted interviews with four Hotamper Inn employees who come from diverse roles, such as positions at the front desk, customer service, kitchen and catering, café, and sales departments. These interviews took place in the Tampere region during 7- 9.11.2023. The majority of the demographic among the hotel's staff involved in this study is Finnish people, with ages ranging from 22 to 35, and most of them were females. Proficiency in English, native Finnish, and some Swedish is evident among the staff. Their work experience in the hotel industry ranges from a few months to fifteen years. The majority of interviewees have a high level of education, and some of the younger individuals are engaged both in work and school activities. The interview took half an hour per interviewee, and it was conducted face-to-face in the hotel (refer to figure 6).

Figure 6: Illustrates interview data information.
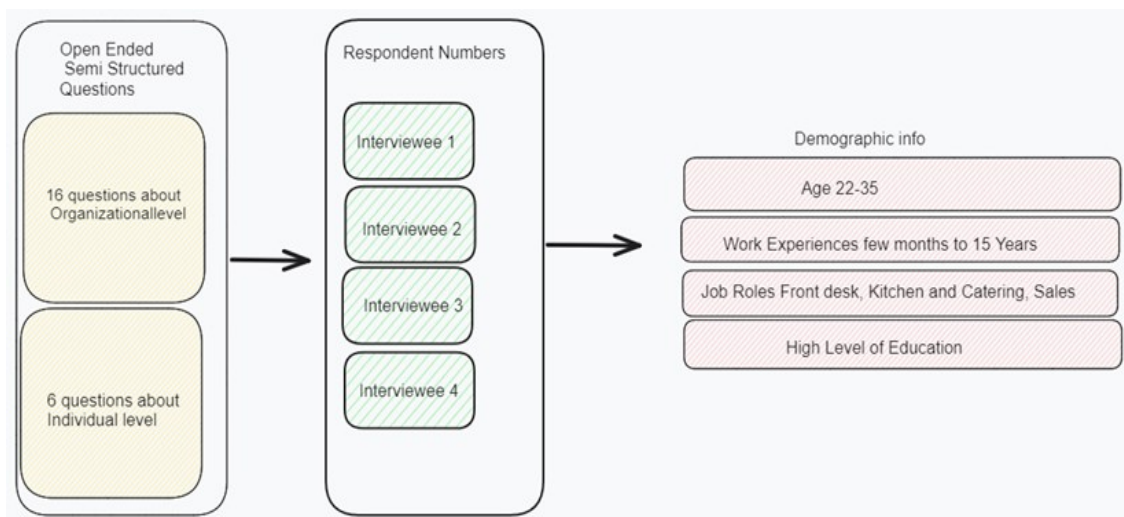
4   Results

For analysis, firstly, the author's analysis is presented followed by direct quotes from interviewees. Although there were other similar ideas mentioned during interviews, only some direct quotes are used so that the analysis is not overloaded by information. The author tries to simplify the analysis as much as possible for possible easy reading.

The interview focused on stress in the hotel, specifically examining the case company 'Hotamper Inn'. Figures 1, 2, and 3 illustrate and follow the question's contents. Firstly, the researcher examined the organizational, environmental, and individual components of stress. Additionally, based on the responses, the Hotamper Inn's stressors were examined. Afterward, the author asked queries on coping mechanisms and approaches to reduce stress on both individual and organizational levels.

4.1   Perceived Uncertainty

As a result of the interview, on a few particular topics, the interviewees with more than ten years of experience gave very different replies than the ones with less than ten years of experience. Employees with more than 10 years of experience become more physically exhausted during work and afterward, whereas employees with less experience become mentally exhausted. It was evident that employees with less experience have greater uncertainty than those with greater experience. The hotel staff interviewed claimed that they become psychologically exhausted due to uncertainties in the workplace, such as unclear information from their managers or supervisors. Individuals with greater experience seemed to be more focused and perceptive of the specifics of their workplace. These known specifics are the outcome of the concerns addressed during many years of employment in the hotel industry. A lower amount of ambiguity aids in reducing organizational stress.

The author asked straightforward questions like "What makes you stressed at work?" Although the responses from the staff varied significantly, uncertainty was at the heart of each one of them. Interviewee number 3 said: "Not knowing how to handle some very difficult situations because you don't always have the right or wrong answers to it, you can just make a decision and then you won't know if it was a good decision or a bad one, and this is what makes me stressed".

Employee number 2 said, "When we were overbooked and sometimes, we couldn't fit all the customers into the hotel rooms I didn't know what to do in that situation".

The author asked about the solutions that can mitigate the levels of stress at work, employee number 1 mentions: "When the customer for some reason starts yelling at you, the presence of the manager helps a lot to control our stress". Employee number 4 claims that: "By clearly outlining the jobs for each employee, stress levels can be lowered because everyone is aware of their responsibilities".

Team Communication: Employee 1 brought up the topic of team communication in the workplace, stating that during the first few months of employment at the hotel, staff members did not interact as much with one another and it was stressful because they misinterpreted one another's intentions or did not provide accurate information. However, this issue has become better with time. She added that because the interns had to explain everything in depth, communication with colleagues—who only speak English—was much clearer and also to the point. She claimed: "Speaking in your native language with others from the same nationality sometimes results in conversations taking unexpected directions".

The second employee, who had more work experience, offered her thoughts on the 'team's communication. She noted: "There are numerous channels for communication, which can be difficult at times because you never know where the information is coming from". Employees have also found it confusing to work across multiple platforms because they are required to respond to five guest reviews each day, but they are unsure of which platform to use for this duty. Other than that, she thought it was easy to communicate in this hotel. Therefore, having too many communication channels may seem like sometimes source of stress.

Role and Task Ambiguity: Employee 1 further stated: "While there are many other things that might cause stress, for her, the most obvious source is when a coworker or supervisor fails to provide her with clear answers, leaving her feeling uncertain and anxious". At this point, the interviewee 2 stated: "I don't deal with much ambiguity or uncertainty".

4.2 Handling Clients in Challenging Circumstances

The most stressful situation, according to interviewees 1, 2, 3, and 4, is "when a customer is angry and yelling at them for no apparent reason—for example, as interviewee number 1 said: "The customer entered the wrong dates for their online reservation—while the receptionist was without any mistakes".

They stated that when they receive support from their supervisor or higher-level managers in this kind of situation, the stress they experience diminishes. In certain circumstances, the presence of managers can help to reduce organizational stress levels. As mentioned in the framework, some of the factors behind abusive customers have been identified.

Shift Preferences: Additionally, the front desk and customer service staff members revealed their preferences and the reasons behind them when the author inquired about their favorite shifts. Because they had trouble waking up in the earliest hours of the morning, the majority of them selected the evening and night shifts. On the other hand, the workers in the other positions expressed satisfaction with their morning shifts as Interviewee 3 shared "I could encounter an alcoholic client during the nightshifts, which would cause. This implies that the shift preference is also related to the source of stress. The night shifts for some can be stressful due to the types of customers they have to face.

4.3 Workaholism and Perfectionism

Also, employee 1 said: "Even though I have to turn off the app's notifications when I'm at home for a vacation or sick day, I don't do it just in case there's something crucial to attend to". She pointed out that constantly checking her phone stresses her out, yet she anyway does it. The nature of work or at least employees at Hotamper Inn feel stressed out because they have to constantly engage with their company app.

These indicate that employees engaging all the time with company-related issues even during their vacation relates to workaholism. This nature of constant engagement among employees may be encouraged by their surroundings. Every community may have a few employees who fall under the trap of workaholism even if they do not want to. This can consequently impact team-level dynamics.

Furthermore, perfectionist workers, such as the person in interview 1, might create a difficult and stressful work environment as well. When on sick leave or vacation, the workers were

questioned about missing work. The one with more years of experience stated that they want to go away from the workplace environment and their coworkers since they get work vibes from them, and it doesn't feel good. However, staff members with fewer than five years of experience admitted that they missed the hotel and their colleagues. This means that some employees feel stressed out with other employees who are perfectionists in nature. Who wants to work to the level of perfection but in turn stress out other employees.

When the interviewer asked about mental strains at work, Employee 2 shared: "I think nothing impacts me anymore". Employee 1 shared: "A combination of every single thing that happens during work can cause mental strain to me". She mentioned that she is worried if she makes any mistakes at work. This also means that some employees are mentally strained because they want to make no mistakes or rather be perfect at what they do.

Following the aforementioned analysis, the author then provides managers in hotels with some recommendations, using the Hotamper Inn's research. After analyzing the interview data, the author has developed Figure 7 to illustrate the sources of stress in Hotamper Inn. The sources of stress can be categorized into three broad themes, namely: 1) Uncertainty, 2) Client handling, and 3) Workaholism and Perfectionism.

Figure 7: Illustrates the three main sources of stress in Hotamper Inn
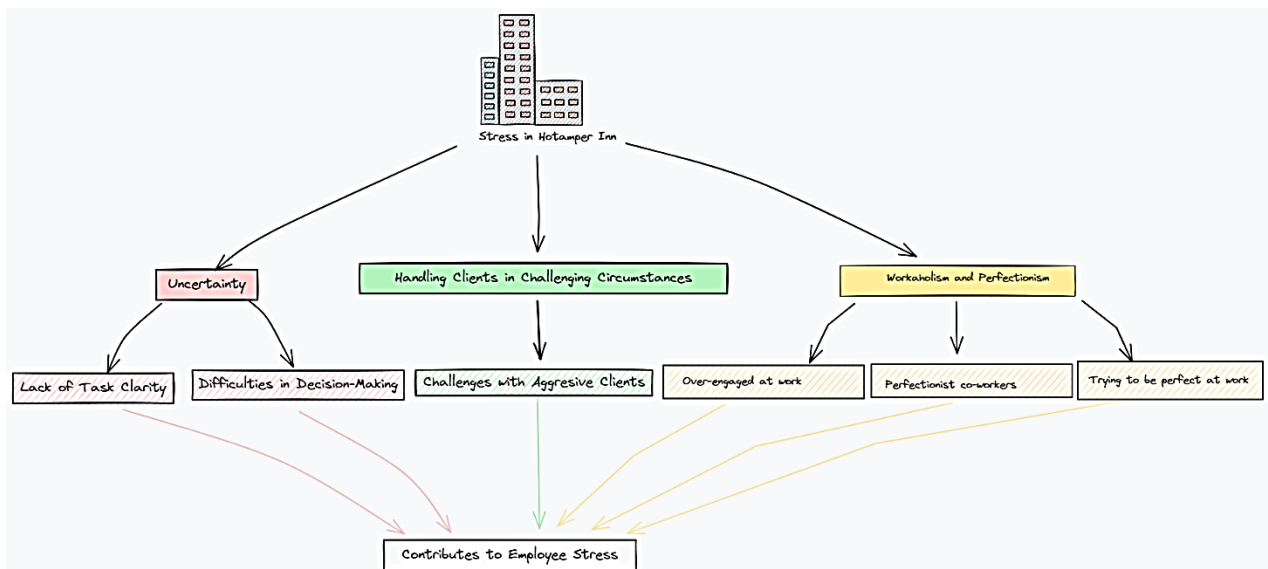
5   Recommendations

5.1   Perceived Uncertainty

This recommendation addresses Hotamper Inn's Manager to manage employees' perceived uncertainty. Based on the conducted interviews, it appears that all employees share a common stress factor that contributes to the stressful environment within the organization. All the employees who were interviewed, whether directly or indirectly, expressed uncertainty as a stress factor. Uncertainty was a major issue when it came to employee stress in Hotamper Inn. Therefore, as an actionable recommendation, the author suggests the crucial role of the manager in this hotel in solving this issue. One way to tackle this is to explain the roles of the employees and offer precise insights into the tasks. A significant part of lowering staff stress is played by managers who specify employees' jobs in greater detail. Also, one strategy that managers can use to address concerns that may arise among employees and resolve cultural challenges is to create cohesive multicultural teams as was discussed in the theoretical framework. As previously discussed, the amount of stress within a business has an impact on customer satisfaction it is challenging for an employee to remain positive when under stress for any reason. Managers would need to assist both during peak hours and in particular situations where consumers are upset with staff members for various reasons, such as incorrect reservations or other issues. In these kinds of situations, employees face uncertainty and stress. The manager's presence in these kinds of circumstances can greatly assist the staff to mitigate the stress. Additionally, the managers should make sure the expectations for work activities and deadlines are realistic.

5.2   Handling Clients in Challenging Circumstances

When working in difficult environments, service personnel are expected to bring their inner selves to the table. Because of this, it can be hard for the staff to disconnect themselves from the abuse they face from their customers. A poor labor force, a poor status shield for service staff, and a lack of deep-rooted connections between service workers and consumers have all been associated with abusive clients (Korczynski & Evans, 2022, p. 770-772). Employees at Hotamper Inn also need to strengthen these strategies to better interact with clients in difficult circumstances. From the moment new hires start working at the hotel, managers may teach them about those situations when customers may become impatient and try to misbehave, but staff members should not take it personally. To assist employees in reducing stress under difficult conditions, this idea should be shared between them by word

of mouth. In addition, managers may improve workforce efficiency, and build long-lasting relationships between staff and customers through *customer interactions* workshops. Also, strengthening the status shield for employees to overcome some of these problems will be effective. These status shields are given by the HR manager, who reports any harassment or toxicity in the team to the upper management to protect the employees from uncomfortable situations.

5.3   Handling Workaholism-Perfectionism

According to the interview, respondents stated that although they are told to deactivate the work app's notifications when on vacation or sick leave, they choose not to do so since they are always concerned about what is happening in the hotel. They also mentioned that one of the stressful things they are concerned about is that they are worried about making the wrong decisions.

According to the study referenced in the theoretical framework, workers who are workaholics and perfectionists might transmit all of their tension, worry, and anxiety onto the team. Raising awareness about not being a workaholic and not expecting flawless work all the time is something a clever manager would need to do. One way to do this would be to arrange regular get-togethers when workers are welcome to socialize, unplug from work, and enjoy each other's company without worrying about responsibilities. In these kinds of instances, the manager might inform them by letting them know that they can focus on their assigned tasks during work hours and not worry about potential emergencies. If they have any queries, they can use anonymous links to obtain all the information they require or they can speak with the management directly. Additionally, an occasion like this causes coworkers to lessen whatever negative emotions they may be having toward one another. This tactic aids in the over-time enhancement of a peaceful and welcoming workplace. Additionally, the managers may find these helpful to foster a healthy work atmosphere within the organization. Customer satisfaction will be greatly impacted if the staff provides a peaceful and welcoming workplace. Furthermore, managers can contribute to the development of a more peaceful and healthy work atmosphere by implementing procedures like open communication, putting an emphasis on employee well-being, and work-life balance in their organizational values.

Individuals who strive to avoid being severe perfectionists claim to be less stressed since perfectionists often hold themselves to extremely high standards, which can be stressful. This also applies to those who are obsessive workers. Managers can address this problem in the workplace by educating staff members about the need to avoid becoming overly

focused on their tasks when it is not truly necessary. Additionally, Hotamper Inn can educate managers about mental health. Provide managers with training to enable them to identify stress and mental health concerns in their employees. Hotamper Inn can provide managers with all the tools they need to support and advise employees on their mental health.

In addition, one general coping strategy for reducing stress on a Personal Level can also be addressed to individual employees. Regarding coping strategies for reducing stress on a personal level after a challenging workday, the staff members mentioned taking a walk around their home while listening to their favorite music, going to the sauna, and remaining in a quiet spot away from other people all work well. In addition, the coping strategies mentioned in (Figure 3) can help to get rid of stress at the individual level. The coping strategies that can be recommended for the employees at the company Hotamper Inn are as below:

Regular exercise helps to release tension. The hotel Hotamper Inn can create a wellness program that promotes and facilitates regular activity.

Discussing issues with friends, family, or a therapist is emotionally comforting. Setting priorities and managing time well might also help to feel less stressed and for addressing this the company can hold workshops on how to prioritize tasks and manage the time well.

6 Conclusion

This work has shown that staff stress inside a firm has a major impact on customer satisfaction and productivity by utilizing theories and qualitative research methods. Managers can lower stress levels in the workplace based on the theoretical framework and the author's suggested parameters.

This study demonstrated how vital managers' roles are in reducing employee stress and eventually increasing productivity in the hotel industry. Stress can be prevented and managed by managers using a range of strategies mostly on task-related stress. When workers are less stressed, they may focus more closely on their work and give better customer service. All of these lead to higher-quality services and better performance.

The hotel manager can reduce task-related stress by using problem- and emotion-focused coping strategies as well as fostering stronger team relationships by putting the recommended tactics into practice, depending on the particular aspects of the situation. Problem-focused coping attempts to understand the problem at hand to find feasible solutions. Stress reduction or elimination is the aim. The goal of emotion-focused coping is to change a person's emotional reaction to a stressor by using words of encouragement and distracting techniques. The research determined that each of the solutions discussed will help to reduce task-related stress and uncertainty.

Since stress is additive, as was previously discussed in the theoretical framework, there should always be strategies to deal with it and partly lessen it; otherwise, the organization would have a crisis after years of stress-related difficulties.

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Appendix 1. Interview Questions

The author interviewed the employees of the case company Hotamper Inn Hotel located in Tampere and the questions asked are listed below. In addition, the interviewees consented to publish the content of the interview. However, there were other follow-up questions besides the listed questions. These listed are the main questions asked.

Organizational level questions

1. Do you enjoy communicating with your coworkers at work?

2. What do you do with the time you have during the coffee break at work?

3. Would you be willing to acknowledge it if your employer asked you to work outside of your schedule because they need more workers?

4. What kind of onboarding do you expect from an employer?

5. How do you get organizational technology training from your employer?

6. How do you get a higher role in the organization after a few years of work in the organization?

7. What kind of changes have you seen in your organization?

8. What kinds of mental strain do you encounter at work?

9. Why working during the day/night is more comfortable for you?

10. How do your coworkers assist you in your work?

11. What stresses you out when using technology at work?

12. How do you help your coworkers?

13. How is it possible to manage your tension and stress at work?

14. What kind of assistance and support do you want to receive from your boss or team leader?

15. What makes you nervous about your job?

16. What can be done in the hotel to make you feel better while working and have less stress?

Individual level questions

1. When you have work in the mornings, do you find it easy to wake up?

2. Would you miss seeing your coworkers and do you miss working in the hotel during your vacation?

3. Do you still have the energy to do daily tasks after a typical workday?

4. Do you have the possibility to travel during your holiday?

5. What calms you down mentally after a long day of working?

6. Do you think you get tired more physically or mentally?

Plan for data management

The thesis writer acknowledged the procedures offered by HAMK's data management strategy for the thesis. The commissioning firm, the author, and the thesis supervisor from Häme University of Applied Sciences have all signed and approved the thesis agreement. The employees were interviewed in an organized manner to gather primary data. All four of the interviews were conducted face to face. All the respondents have consented to the exclusive use of the information gathered for this particular study. While private information is not included in the data, the participant's employment statuses are. All of the interview information was recorded, and only participants and the thesis supervisor, if necessary, would have access to it. The author's notebook, which is password- and VPN-secured, is where the data that was collected is kept. The recordings must be kept safe for a year following the thesis's publication, with the promise that the information gathered would be destroyed.