

Effects Of Work Stress On Workers In The Tourism Sector In The Post-Pandemic: Sincelejo Case – Colombia

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Abstract

The COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in the generation of new dynamics at the social and economic level; among which stands out what is related to work stress of people who return to their jobs after preventive confinement. In this way, the present study seeks to define the effects of work stress in hotel companies in the city of Sincelejo during the post-pandemic era. At the methodological level, a quantitative study with a descriptive level is described, in which a Likert scale questionnaire related to the effects of work stress from the psychological, physical and emotional aspects is applied to a sample of 53 collaborators belonging to 20 companies in the hotel sector from the city of Sincelejo (Colombia). The results found in the study show the presence of the effects of work stress within the workers involved in the collection process; especially in emotional and physical stress. Based on the findings, it is possible to conclude that currently within the tourism sector there is a presence of work stress and its effects; a fact that could be accentuated by the personal and social consequences of COVID 19, which not only affected the health of people but has also generated an adverse effect on companies in sectors such as tourism due to the drop in tourism worldwide in previous years.

Keywords: Work stress, tourism sector, COVID 19, post-pandemic

Introduction

For organizations today, human capital is recognized as one of the key elements in the development of activities towards the achievement of the goals and objectives set; especially in the current context in which globalization and new technologies converge to create a highly competitive context that requires trained and motivated personnel and strategic leadership to manage this capital effectively and humanely (Radieva & Kolomiets, 2019; Romanov, 2021).

This last element related to the human within the administrative process becomes more relevant today; due to the various research findings that emphasize the importance of healthy and happy human capital and how this impacts not only the quality of life of people, but also organizational results (Mendoza-Ocasal et al., 2021; Cueto et al., 2023). In this sense, it is mentioned that the quality of life inside and outside work is increasingly relevant for collaborators, which represents a significant challenge for the strategic levels of companies, who must be concerned about attracting trained personnel and their time, they must develop efforts towards the retention of talent (Mendoza-Ocasal et al., 2022).

Addressing the working conditions and health of employees is then one of the most relevant points for senior management, where strategies and policies must be developed to create a healthy environment for workers, preventing various risks such as physical or psychosocial (Nunez & Prieto, 2019). In this way, in the approach to psychosocial risks, mention is made of work stress, which is one of the pathologies most present in employees worldwide (Minghua, 2021; Vaničková, 2021). Various investigations show that around 15% of economically active people in the world have suffered at least once from a

mental illness (World Health Organization, 2022).

In this sense, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2014) points out that work stress is considered one of the aspects that causes the most health problems in employees within organizations, thereby generating poor labor performance. In addition, stress is a trigger for physical problems such as headaches, hypertension, muscle tension, emotional problems such as mood swings, irritability, disorientation, among others.

In the same way, empirical evidence shows how job stress has a level of direct incidence on the performance of workers, on their satisfaction and also on the level of turnover and absenteeism in the organization (Parra et al., 2020; Sutrisno, 2022). The aforementioned reveals the importance for organizations and the academic sector of establishing clear actions in the study of work stress, so that effective actions can be developed for its prevention and treatment within the staff (Babilonia, Nuñez & Escobar, 2022; Cruz -Zuñiga et al., 2022).

In Colombia, the problems caused by work stress are an important topic in the studies that have been carried out in different organizations, including Sarsosa-Prowesk & Charria-Ortiz (2018) and Yupari-Azabache et., al (2022), which delve into the presence of work stress within institutions in sectors such as health; evidencing how the elements of the context significantly affect the presence of work stress. Due to all of the above, it can be stated that stress can be considered one of the diseases that most affect employees in Latin America and Europe in this century, all of which is a product of the transformations brought about by globalization that, without a doubt, has led organizations to seek ways to become more competitive (Álvarez-Silva, Herrera-López, Lániz-Vargas & González-

Zhagñay, 2022; Rodríguez-Pérez, Fernández & Camino, 2022).

Certainly, the aforementioned has shown the identification of work stress as a problematic situation within companies, which have increasingly developed measures towards its treatment and prevention (Bakhuys-Roozeboom et al., 2020). However, it is worth mentioning that in recent years because of the COVID 19 pandemic there has been an extremely drastic change in society from educational to organizational (Irawanto, Novianti & Roz, 2021).

Among several of the consequences of the aforementioned pandemic were the effects on the public health of the population, which in many cases was forced to carry out a preventive confinement in order to avoid contracting or spreading said virus; greatly affecting their well-being and mental health (Cruz et al., 2021; Nan et al., 2021). From the economic point of view, many sectors worldwide fell, such as entertainment and tourism, which, due to the restrictions, found it necessary to stop their activities (Mirehie & Cho, 2022; Bhatia, Roy & Kumar, 2022).

Certainly, one of the sectors most affected by the COVID 19 pandemic was the tourism sector, which presented a drop between 20 and 30 percent in its activity (Soto, 2021). In this sense, the reopening of economic activities worldwide has allowed a recovery of these sectors strongly affected during the pandemic, which face great challenges to overcome the crisis suffered in previous years and to be able to stay on their feet in current markets (Sousa et al., 2022).

These factors of an economic nature greatly affect companies in the tourism industry, which have undertaken strategies to overcome the past crisis (Colmekcioglu, Dineva & Lu, 2022), resulting in a high level of demand and

expectation towards tourists. collaborators, who are already suffering from the psychological consequences of this preventive safeguard (Slavković, Ognjanović & Bugarčić, 2023)

In the case of Sincelejo (Colombia) and the entire department of Sucre, the hotel sector is one of the most prominent representatives of the tourism sector in said region (Vergara & Tobías, 2018); which allows to reveal the importance of generating studies aimed at the health of the collaborators of said sector, especially considering both internal and external situations that converge in the current context and could significantly affect their quality of life and in turn the sustainability of the sector in said city. Based on the above, the present study is directed towards defining the effects of work stress in hotel companies in the city of Sincelejo during the post-pandemic era.

Materials and methods

From the methodological level, the present study is developed from the positivist paradigm with a quantitative approach, being a descriptive level field investigation in which a collection instrument is applied directly from the sample objects for the analysis of the effects of work stress in the hotel companies of the city of Sincelejo during the post-pandemic era; Data collection carried out in the year 2022 in the mentioned city of Colombia.

The collection instrument used for the research seeks to study the effects of work stress from Psychological stress, Physical stress and Emotional stress to its sample of 53 collaborators linked to 20 companies in the hotel sector of the city of Sincelejo. Said instrument is validated through the Cronbach's Alpha statistic and shows an indicator of 0.70, which is considered a reliable value for studies related to the social sciences. The analysis of

the instrument is handled with a Likert scale stipulated as follows: Always (A), Almost always (AA), Sometimes (S), Almost never (AN) and Never (N).

In this sense, with the results of the scale we proceed to carry out a statistical processing

based on descriptive statistics with the indicators of frequency, absolute frequency and the arithmetic mean, to later analyze the arithmetic mean from the study variable with the following relationship of analysis:

Table 1. Instrument Scale and Performance Category

Alternatives	Range	Categories
Always	4.21 – 5.00	Strongly present
Almost always	3.41 – 4.20	Present
Sometimes	2.61 – 3.40	Moderately present
Almost never	1.81 – 2.60	Barely present
Never	1.00 – 1.80	Absent

Source: Authors (2023)

Results

The results of the field collection process of this study are presented below:

Table 2. Effects of work stress

Indicators	Answer Alternatives											Total IAF	Total RF	AVG
	A		AA		S		AN		N					
	A f	Rf	A f	Rf	A f	Rf	A f	Rf	A f	Rf				
Psychological stress	7	13,2 1	5	9,43	1 0	18,8 7	1 2	22,6 4	1 9	35,8 5	53	100,0 0	2,40	
Physical stress	1 2	22,6 4	6	11,3 2	9	16,9 8	9	16,9 8	1 7	32,0 8	53	100,0 0	2,80	
Emotional stress	1 3	24,5 3	6	11,3 2	8	15,0 9	8	15,0 9	1 8	33,9 6	53	100,0 0	2,80	
Arithmetic average	2,70													
Category	Moderately present													

Source: Authors (2023)

In the dimension effects of work stress, it began with the psychological stress indicator, of the 53 respondents, 19 were 35.85% and they were inclined towards the option, it is never considered that

the employees of the Hotel show psychological stress by virtue of manifesting physical pressure, the collaborators presented a high degree of psychological stress, for which their work productivity is deficient and never the level of stress in which their collaborators find themselves, who may experience health problems.

Likewise, 12 of the subjects, which reflect 22.64%, favored the option almost never is as indicated in the previous paragraph, 10 workers with 18.87% assumed the option sometimes seven (7) assumed a 13 21% marked the option always and five (5) subjects preferred the alternative almost always is as mentioned above. The average was 2.40, as shown in the following figure:

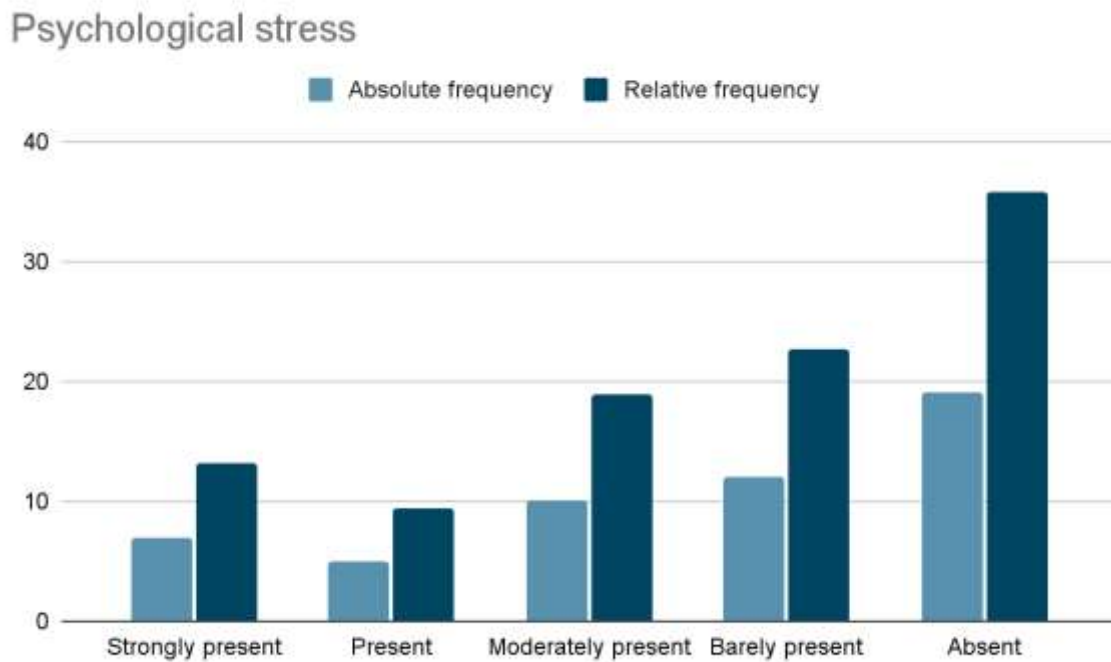


Figure 1. Psychological stress

The results of this item do not coincide with Lazarus & Folkman (1986), who state that the causes of this type of stress can be due to various factors, such as day-to-day responsibilities or activities, or unusual situations, but with great impact, such as traumas or illnesses of the individual or illnesses of close relatives. When subjects state that they are unable to control daily activities or the changes caused by certain diseases, then they feel anguish and may decrease the quality of life of the people who suffer from it.

The physical stress indicator, of the 53 subjects, 17 represent 32.08% were inclined towards the never option, that is to say that the Hotel collaborators have physical problems, a product of work stress where the Hotel collaborators are, even if they are at a level of work stress, they strive for the achievement of goals; Likewise, there is absenteeism from work, a product of the physical stress in which their collaborators find themselves.

On the other hand, 12 subjects with 22.64% indicated the option always with respect to the comments made previously, 9 collaborators

reflected with 16.98% expressed the option sometimes and almost never, respectively, it is as mentioned in advance and 6 individuals with 11.32% expressed the option, the

aforementioned approaches are almost always met. The average of the indicator was 2.80, which is observed in figure 2:

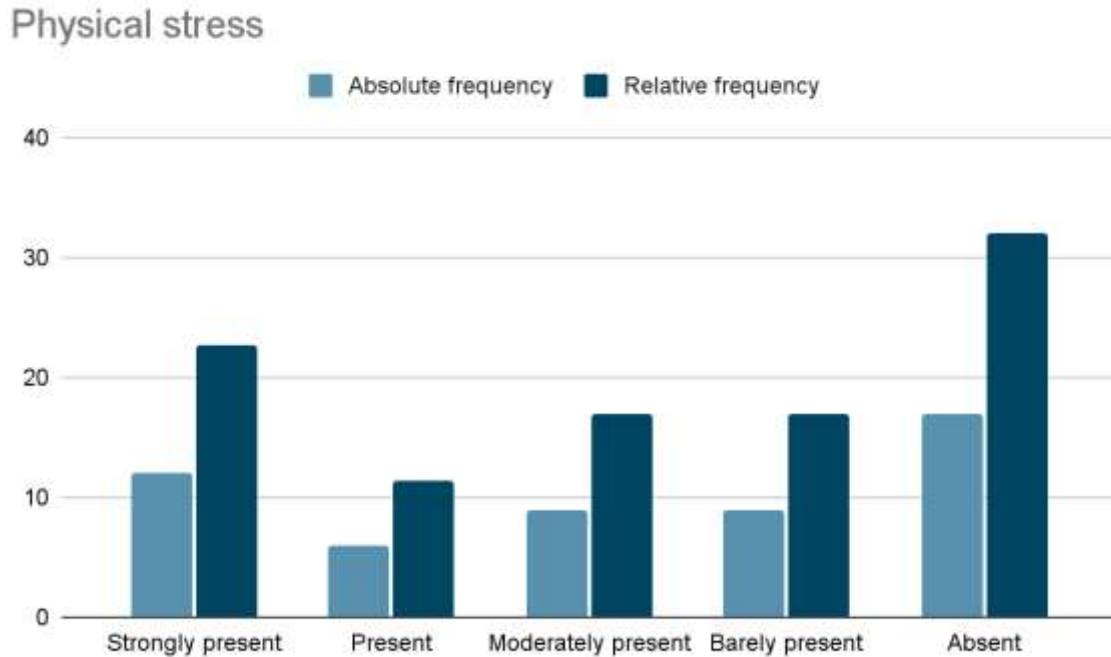


Figure 2. Physical stress

These results coincide with Suárez (2013), who indicates that when there is the presence of a threat or danger, the organism prepares to give two quick responses, fight or flee. It is also pointed out that in any of these responses the autonomous nervous system is involved, which is in charge of maintaining involuntary organic functions, such as breathing.

The emotional stress indicator, of the 53 surveyed, 18 representing 33.96% favored the never option. In the company, the collaborators generate continuous work demands, as a result of the stress in which they find themselves, they manage the low self-esteem that the employees present. collaborators, which makes them unproductive, and the collaborators of the

Hotel are alert of what happens around it, to achieve the goals established in their planning.

Of the 13 respondents, 24.53% answered the alternative, they always support the approach, 8 subjects with 15.09% answered the alternatives sometimes and almost never, respectively, as mentioned in previous paragraphs, finally it is shown that six (6) assumed 11.32% stated almost always. The average of the indicator was positioned at 2.80.

When obtaining the results of evaluating the dimension effects of work stress with its respective indicators (psychological stress, physical stress and emotional stress), it yielded an average of 2.70 and was located in the moderately present category, as evidenced by the following figure 3:

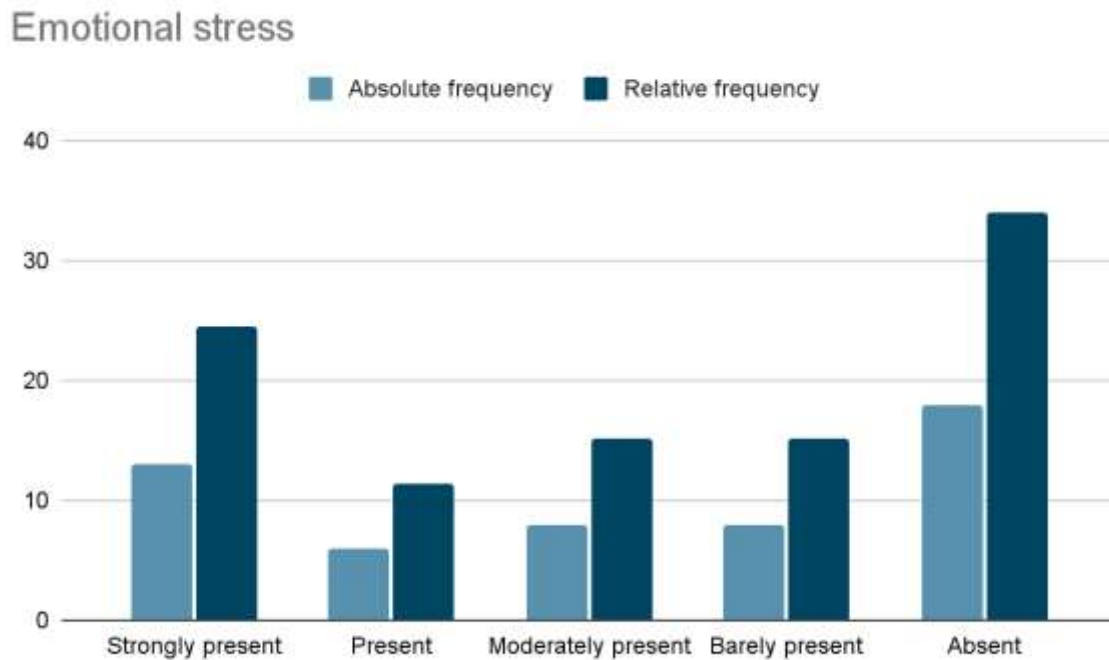


Figure 3. Emotional stress

Discussion

In the first instance, based on the findings, it is concluded that the effects of work stress were defined in the companies under study as moderately present. It was indicated that psychological stress was defined as little present and physical stress and emotional stress were defined as moderately present. It is concluded that these variables agree with the results obtained in their dimensions by the staff surveyed within the hotel companies of Sincelejo-Sucre. It is in the present category according to the arithmetic mean. In this sense, various investigations such as those of Cruz-Zuñiga et al., (2022) and Padrón et al., (2022) who emphasize the effects of work stress evidenced in areas such as the performance of workers and in turn on the work environment and suffering from other mental illnesses such as alcoholism or depression.

In turn, research such as that of Babilonia, Nuñez & Escobar (2022) shows the growth in

research terms of the area of knowledge of work stress and various work-related illnesses, resulting in evidence of effort and strategies in the public health sector. and business towards the prevention and care of this type of occupational health conditions.

In this sense, the results of the study show how the current context surrounded by the dynamics of the post-pandemic reveals a presence of work stress in the case study of the city of Sincelejo. This is contrasted with studies such as that of Salama et al., (2022) and Liu, Tan & Mai (2023) that show the presence of work stress and other mental illnesses in the tourism sector in various countries such as China and Egypt.

In this way, based on the findings to alleviate the effects of psychological stress, it is suggested that managers of hotel companies take courses on psychological stress, physical stress and emotional stress since, in any case, stress cannot be seen as something negative, if

not, as a natural reaction that prepares the human being to take action in the event of events (Buitrago-Orjuela, et al., 2021).

For these reasons, it is considered that the objective of the courses would be to raise awareness among managers and human talent personnel about the strategies proposed to solve these effects. This implies selecting effective alternatives from the work and/or personal context that allow having a positive impact on the work team (López, 2019; Vaníčková, 2021).

It should be noted that the participants will be able to carry out group exercises that will allow them to evaluate their own stress levels and learn the best practices for their managerial performance. Likewise, it is indicated that the courses would be developed in a six-month period, where the person responsible for them would be the senior management and the Department of Human Talent, considering its execution from the expert personnel in the area (facilitator), financial resources, place of development of courses, among others. It is also indicated that the benefit that these courses would offer will be the development and improvement of personal and professional skills.

As a last factor, it is concluded that the COVID 19 pandemic has certainly caused a significant change worldwide, which requires companies to adapt and evolve towards the new contexts and trends in the business field; especially in relation to the health of workers and their quality of life so that organizations can positively permeate in overcoming the difficulties and gaps resulting from the international health crisis.

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