

BALANCING WORKPLACE STRESS: EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS FROM THE IMPRESS PROJECT

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Abstract. Purpose – This study aims to investigate the relationship between workplace stressors, resources, and perceived stress among employees by analysing survey data collected via the IMPRESS project. The objectives were to test the direct effects of stressors and resources on stress, and the moderating role of resources.

Research methodology – Stressors, resources, and stress were measured using the Job Demands-Resources framework and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used for statistical analysis.

Findings – It was found that several stressors, particularly those related to roles and responsibilities, have a significant direct impact on stress levels.

Research limitations – The study limitation is the geographical focus which being limited to Latvia.

Practical implications – The principal conclusion is that managing stressors, e.g. role overload, role conflict and work-life balance, is critical, and well-defined work processes can significantly contribute to employee well-being.

Originality/Value – The authors found that the COVID-19 pandemic did not significantly change workplace stressors, with roles and responsibilities remaining the dominant factor both before and during the pandemic.

Keywords: workplace stress, process management, job demands-resources model, role related stressors, moderation, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).

JEL Classification: J28, M54.

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1. Introduction

In the 21st century, one of the major problems in our rapidly changing world is stress and its related consequences. Stress is defined as a complex, long-standing emotional state created by biochemical responses in the human body and psychological reactions to environmental pressures when individuals perceive that they lack the resources to respond to them (Seaward, 2019). Cooper and Marshall (1976) mention overload, role ambiguity, job duty ambiguity, the influence of other people, the impact of the social environment, behavioural norms and rules, the technical environment, and organisational culture, among others, as examples of sources of stressors. Stress arises under the influence of stressors. In his research, Schuler has reviewed and analysed the definitions of stress offered by numerous authors, concluding that stress is a subjective, intense, and uncomfortable state of tension arising from the subjective perception of the situation (Schuler, 1980).

Constant hurry, lack of time, excitement, problem situations, and tension at work can lead to serious health problems and burnout. This is confirmed by the European Agency for Safety and Health, stating that around half of European employees consider stress a common workplace phenomenon, causing around 50% of the working days to be delayed (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, n.d.). Their studies show that heightened employee stress levels negatively affect company performance indicators and often show inadequacies in organisational structures. The authority defines psychosocial risks as the factors that lead to stress and affect employees' mental and physical health, and musculoskeletal disorder issues as the common health problems caused by stress. Research shows that the most frequent reason for work absences in Europe is related directly to health issues and stress, and it should be noted that this type of absence due to sick leaves is relatively longer than absence due to other health issues, and it leads to considerable financial losses for the company. The following working conditions leading to psychosocial risks are distinguished (Ågotnes et al., 2023; Losada-Otálora et al. 2020; Nielsen et al., 2018; Renkema et al., 2023; Qamari et al., 2020): 1) excessive workload, poor work-life balance; 2) lack of involvement in decision-making that directly affects the employee; 3) lack of influence on the process of carrying out work; 4) confusing or conflicting requirements to the job duties; 5) poor communication on changes in the company; 6) ineffective communication and lack of support from colleagues and management; 7) work with too demanding clients.

Meanwhile, resources are factors upon which an individual can rely when dealing with a stressful situation, and that can originate from various sources (Bäckström et al., 2016; Guan & Frenkel, 2019; Spiesch et al., 2018). To timely prevent stress and its impact, a company first needs to identify places, conditions, and processes, or stressors, that create problem situations within the company. It is also crucial to identify the resources that the company already possesses to mitigate and improve the situation. Supervisor support is necessary to assist employees in coping with increasing workloads and deadlines, constant planning and decision-making, as well as continual learning and stress resulting from the ever-changing working conditions (Mauno et al., 2019; Putnam et al., 2014). On one hand, digital technologies play a crucial role in identifying and leveraging opportunities, enhancing efficiency, and strengthening a company's competitiveness, particularly in an uncertain environment (Zizi et al., 2025). On the other hand, research on the digitalisation of office work reveals an ideological tension between the need for structured processes and the demand for flexibility in modern work environments. In the digital workplace, this dilemma manifests as a necessity for individuals to embody both flexibility and structure in their work, underscoring the dilemma as irresolvable and suggesting that the use of digital tools might exacerbate work-life stress. As a potential remedy for this managerial problem, Lindell et al. (2022) recommend finding a balance between organisational and managerial regulations, policies, and rules on navigating digital work and affording a level of freedom for workplace organisation at the individual level. The work adds to researches conducted around changes in work patterns due to the COVID-19 – which demonstrated that the difficulty of work tasks is positively related to stress while time spent working from home, managing work-life balance and receiving support from direct managers and peers are negatively related to stress and positively to overall job engagement (Heriyati et al., 2024; Olsen et al., 2023) while compassionate managerial and

leadership style can ease workplace stressors and reduce stress experiences among employees in extreme situations contrary to situations in high-power distance cultures when it is impossible to challenge employer on the issues related to burnout or work overload (Stankevičienė et al., 2021; Oruh & Dibia, 2020; Pariona-Cabrera et al., 2023).

The aim of this study is to explore the dynamics of workplace stress by examining both the direct and moderating influences of stressors and resources. Specifically, the research investigates whether workplace stressors and resources independently contribute to perceived stress levels among employees. Furthermore, the study examines whether resources serve as moderating factors that can buffer or amplify the effects of stressors on stress. By addressing these relationships, the study provides empirical insights into the mechanisms through which workplace environments shape employee well-being. This study was conducted in the framework of the IMPRESS project (Improving Management Competencies on Excellence-based Stress Avoidance and Working towards Sustainable Organisational Development in Europe), funded by the Erasmus+ Programme. The overarching goal of the project is to develop a methodology aimed at reducing workplace stress through the enhancement of managerial competencies and organizational excellence. The survey was administered across four European countries – Germany, Spain, Ireland/England, and Latvia – ensuring a cross-national perspective on workplace stress dynamics (IMPRESS, n.d.). This international scope supports the generalizability of findings and allows for comparative insight into stress-related factors in diverse organizational and cultural contexts. This research fills this gap by examining how clear processes, managerial support, and effective communication may provide organizations with actionable strategies to manage stress sustainably.

2. Theoretical framework

The main text should include the previous research on the subject, methodology (for empirical paper) and/or theoretical framework (for review paper), hypothesis (for empirical paper) and/or a research question (for review paper) should be derived/ developed logically based on the previous studies, results of the research, and discussion with an interpretation of the results obtained, finalising with the conclusion.

Numerous studies identified that the main stressors are high workload, long working hours, too much responsibility, poor management, lack of clarity on the results to be achieved, and lack of employee involvement in decision-making are the stressors that are mentioned by respondents more often than others (Berger et al., 2019; Leuteritz et al., 2019; Pfaffinger et al., 2020; Schoellbauer et al., 2022; Suija-Markova et al., 2020). It was disclosed that there is a correlation between different stressors, and if the influence of one group of stressors grows, then the negative impact of related stressors also increases.

As mentioned above, the increase in stress level leads to health issues, and treatment of these disorders requires longer periods of time than other diseases, which in turn causes financial losses for organisations. Researchers identified that job-related stress negatively influenced employees' commitment (Yamoah, 2025). Hence there is an interdependency between the stress level of employees and the negative performance of organisations, and they are interested in implementing preventive practices for reducing stressors at different levels

in the organisation. For instance, the supervisor's involvement is necessary for debriefing complex tasks to decrease the stress level. Also, the management team needs to plan the workload by considering the capacities of employees to perform job duties and providing them with professional training and options for balancing working and personal time. In short, decreasing stressors' impact is a manageable process.

In their foundational paper on how resources interact with job demands in predicting burnout and motivation, Bakker and Demerouti defined resources as aspects of work – such as support, autonomy, and feedback – that help employees achieve goals, reduce strain, and foster growth, ultimately buffering stress and enhancing well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) similarly to Hobfoll, who explored Conservation of Resources (COR) a decade earlier and defined resources as objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by individuals or serve as means to obtain such values, and their loss or threatened loss is a primary cause of stress (Hobfoll, 1989). While the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Halbersleben et al., 2014; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993) emphasizes the individual's need to acquire and retain valuable resources, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model provides a more balanced perspective by explicitly linking job demands with available resources, rather than focusing solely on resource accumulation and protection. Hence the resources that may facilitate coping with stressors are related to organisational aspects, such as clear rules, properly aligned processes, open communication, and the support of the manager.

The authors define a process as a series of continuous or intermittent, cross-functional activities that are intrinsically connected with work flowing through these activities toward a particular outcome or purpose. Concurrently, process management enables an organisation to focus on the overall performance of the entire organisation. Notably, a company gains an advantage if its processes are properly monitored and managed; transparent processes are one of the prerequisites for satisfying both external and internal customers. This satisfaction is related to performance and productivity in the organisation, as flaws in process management influence employees' attitudes towards work and their perceptions of well-being. In outline, companies need to be aware of stressors and resources and organise the work process for employees in a more manageable and predictable manner. Based on Reif et al. (2018) described global model of stress, the authors raise such hypotheses:

H1: *the stressors have direct effects on stress.*

H2: *the resources have direct effects on stress.*

H3: *the resources have moderating effects on the relationships between stressors and stress.*

The theoretical model of the study is presented in Figure 1.

This study addresses a notable gap in the literature concerning the role of workplace processes and resources in mitigating stressors in the context of sustainable organizational development. While numerous studies have identified primary stressors such as high workload, extended working hours, excessive responsibility, and insufficient management there is limited research on how structured process management and organizational resources may be leveraged to reduce these stressors and enhance both employee well-being and organizational performance. This research fills this gap by examining how clear processes, managerial support, and effective communication may provide organizations with actionable strategies to manage stress sustainably.

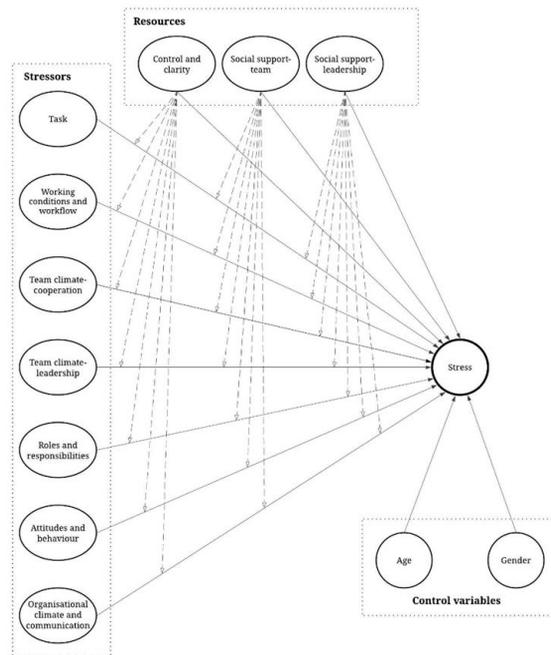


Figure 1. The theoretical model

3. Methods

3.1. Data and sample

Data were obtained from a survey conducted in the frame of the IMPRESS project (Improving Management Competencies on Excellence-based Stress Avoidance and Working towards Sustainable Organisational Development in Europe; Project reference: 588315-EPP-1-2017-1-ES-EPPKA2-KA funded by Erasmus Plus). The survey was carried out in four countries: Germany, Spain, Ireland/England, and Latvia (IMPRESS, n.d.). The research paper explores data from Latvia, which is viewed in the context of process management.

The survey was published on the platform provided by one of the project partners (IBK Management Solutions GmbH, located in Wiesbaden, Germany). The survey covered people working part-time or full-time. The data collection process included distributing a link to the survey to the targeted audience through professional and private networks, mailing lists and panels of interested people. Before starting the survey, participants were informed of the study's aims and the right to refuse participation or withdraw from the study at any time i.e., all participants completed the survey voluntarily. This study adheres to the relevant ethical guidelines for human subjects, and the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were maintained throughout the study. To avoid potential selection bias, the research team did not distribute the survey directly to any single company. Instead, the survey was circulated via professional associations to ensure diversity across industries and occupational backgrounds.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Year	2018	2021
Gender:		
woman	201 (70%)	101 (78%)
man	77 (27%)	25 (19%)
other or no answer	9 (3%)	4 (3%)
Age:		
minimum–maximum	23–81	19–68
mean	45.63	34.22
Total	287	130

The survey includes two independent samples of respondents for two time periods. The first wave of the survey was conducted in 2018, and the second wave was conducted in 2021. The total sample consists of 287 respondents in 2018 and 130 respondents in 2021. This sample size satisfies the guidelines suggested by Hair et al. (2022): at least 91 observations would be necessary to detect R-square values around 0.25, assuming a significance level of 5% and statistical power of 80%. Table 1 displays the profile of respondents.

3.2. Research instrument

Stressors, resources, and stress were measured using a self-reported “IMPRESS Stress Survey” questionnaire based on the Job Demands-Resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), including multiple validated measures. For the Latvian sample, the questionnaire was applied in Latvian. The translation process adhered to the International Test Commission’s guidelines (2017), involving forward and backward translations by occupational psychology experts. Adjustments were made for conceptual discrepancies until a satisfactory version was achieved (Czakert et al., 2022). The IMPRESS consortium’s national research experts reviewed the final local language questionnaires for language adequacy and overall quality.

3.3. Independent variables

Seven stressors-related and three resources-related independent variables are used: stressors – 1) tasks, 2) working conditions and workflow, 3) team climate-cooperation, 4) team climate-leadership, 5) roles and responsibilities, 6) attitudes and behaviour, 7) organisational climate and communication; resources – 1) control and clarity, 2) social support-team, 3) social support-leadership. Stressors-related items were introduced with the question, “When I think about my work, to what degree do these aspects cause me stress?”. Resources-related items were introduced with the question, “When I think about my work, to what degree do these aspects cause me relief?”. All items are rated with a five-point scale: 1 = not at all, 2 = very little, 3 = to some degree, 4 = to a great degree, 5 = to a very great degree. The sources of validated measures adapted for stressors- and resources-related items are specified in Table 2.

Table 2. Sources of validated measures (developed by authors)

Independent variable	Source
Stressors: task (8 items)	Ivancevich and Matteson (1984), Leuteritz et al. (2017), Ragu-Nathan et al. (2008), Spielberger and Reheiser (1994), Tarafdar et al. (2007), Vagg and Spielberger (1998).
Working conditions and workflow (9 items)	Carstensen (2016), Hoegl et al. (2004), Karasek (1985), Pelfrene et al. (2003), Peters and O'Connor (1980), Ragu-Nathan et al. (2008), Reif et al. (2018), Spielberger and Reheiser (1994), Usdaw (n.d.), Vagg and Spielberger (1998).
Team climate- cooperation (10 items)	Edwards et al. (2008), Jönsson et al. (2017), Morrison and Phelps (1999), Pariona-Cabrera et al. (2023), Usdaw (n.d.).
Team climate-leadership (5 items)	Bass (1985), Bass and Avolio (1997).
Roles and responsibilities (9 items)	Berger et al. (2011), Carstensen (2016), Glazer and Beehr (2005), Ivancevich and Matteson (1984), Ragu-Nathan et al. (2008), Spielberger and Reheiser (1994), Tarafdar et al. (2007), Vagg and Spielberger (1998).
Attitudes and behaviour (3 items)	Meuter et al. (2003), Renkema et al. (2023).
Organisational climate and communication (10 items)	Carstensen (2016), Cohrs et al. (2006), Ivancevich and Matteson (1984), Spielberger and Reheiser (1994), Usdaw (n.d.), Vagg and Spielberger (1998).
Resources: control and clarity (5 items)	Cohrs et al. (2006), Edwards et al. (2008), National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (n.d.).
Social support-team (3 items)	Edwards et al. (2008), Guan and Frenkel (2019), Leuteritz et al. (2017).
Social support-leadership (10 items)	Berger et al. (2011), Edwards et al. (2008), Guan and Frenkel (2019).

3.4. Dependent variables

The dependent variable of the study is stress. Stress items were introduced with the question: "Please read these aspects, and when answering, think of your current work situation. How often did this happen to you last month?". Items are rated with a five-point scale: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = very often. In this study, a set of five items from different measures were applied to assess the overall stress level of respondents. This included a single-question stress measure (Elo et al., 2003) and several emotional-cognitive and physical stress-related symptoms, such as exhaustion, frustration, sleeping problems and irritation (Goldberg, 1972; Haslam & Reicher, 2006; Parker & DeCotiis, 1983).

3.5. Control variables

Prior research shows that gender and age might affect individuals' occupational stress (Miller et al., 2000; Rauschenbach et al., 2013), therefore these characteristics were incorporated as control variables into the study. Gender was measured using a nonbinary scale (1 = male; 2 = female; other), but because the answer "other" was selected extremely rare, only "male" and "female" were included in the gender measure. Age was measured by a ratio scale asking respondents to write their age in years.

3.6. Statistical analysis

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was carried out in the study using Smart PLS software version (4). PLS-SEM has been widely used in different management disciplines, including human resource management (Ringle et al., 2020) and quality management (Magno et al., 2022). PLS-SEM is an effective method for analysing complex model when there are small sample size and the data distribution is skewed (Hair et al., 2022).

The measurement model assessment was the first step in PLS-SEM. As all independent and dependent variables are modelled based on a reflective measurement model, the item reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity and discriminant validity of the measures were evaluated (Hair et al., 2022). The reliability of the measurement model was assessed by item loadings, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficient rhoC. Each measure's Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was evaluated to check convergent validity. The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations was used for discriminant validity assessment.

The next step was the structural model assessment to evaluate the relationships between the study variables and hypotheses to be tested. Before assessing the structural model results, collinearity issues among measures were examined by Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. The key criteria for assessing the structural model in PLS-SEM were the significance and relevance of the path coefficients (β), the effect size (f-square values), the level of the coefficient of determination (R-square and adjusted R-square values), the predictive relevance (Q-square values) and the predictive power (differences between root mean squared error or RMSE values produced by PLS-SEM with those produced by the linear regression model (LM)).

In the final part of the study, multigroup analyses were applied to determine the differences between the model based on the survey period.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement model assessment

In the initial measurement model, item loadings for eleven measures were in the range of 0.357 to 0.940. To get a satisfactory level of item reliability, items with low loadings in both samples of 2018 and 2021 were removed from the model. The obtained measurement model consists mostly of items with loading at least 0.708 so exceeding the threshold value (Hair et al., 2022). However, some items with loadings between 0.546 and 0.698 have been maintained because of their relevance to the content validity of the measure.

The internal consistency reliability and convergent validity of each measure are presented below.

The values of Cronbach's alpha are higher than the satisfactory threshold of 0.70, excepting for measures "Attitude and behaviour" and "Control and clarity" in the 2021-year sample. For these measures in the 2021-year sample, the values of Cronbach's alpha are 0.694 and 0.631, that could be considered as acceptable level of reliability. The values of more liberal composite reliability coefficient rhoC also exceed the satisfactory threshold of 0.70. Thus, internal consistency and reliability of measures is achieved. All of the AVE values are greater than the acceptable threshold of 0.50 (Hair et al., 2022), so convergent validity is confirmed.

Discriminant validity, assessed with the heterotrait-monotrait criterion, indicates that all HTMT values are below the threshold value of 0.85 for conceptually different measures or 0.90 for conceptually similar measures (Hair et al., 2022). Thus, there is no discriminant validity issue.

4.2. Structural model assessment

Once the reliability and validity of the measurement model have been confirmed, the relevance and predictive capability of the structural model could be evaluated. Since the theoretical model contains control variables and moderating relationships, the assessment metrics for four models were calculated: 1st model is with only the control variables and the dependent variable; 2nd model includes direct effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable without the control variables; 3rd model includes direct effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable with the control variables; 4th model is the complete model with the control variables and the moderating relationships.

The initial step is to examine the structural model for potential collinearity issues. All VIF values for the direct effects, i.e., for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd models, are less than the recommended threshold of 5 (Hair et al., 2022), indicating no multicollinearity issues. In the 4th model, high VIF values are observed for some moderating relationships, but that could not be considered as critical danger.

According to the results of the structural model assessment for the 2018 and 2021 samples, the addition of predictive variables related to stressors and resources significantly better explains the dependent variable (stress) than if the model consisted only of control variables. The addition of moderating relationships improves the model's explanatory power, which can be rated as above average (Hair et al., 2022).

The results of the 2018 sample indicate that age significantly impacts stress levels – the older the respondent, the lower the stress level. However, its effect size is relatively small (Cohen, 1988). The results of the 2021 sample do not show an impact of age on stress levels. Regarding the other control variable, gender, it does not have a significant impact in either year of the study.

Additionally, the results show that stressors such as task, team climate-cooperation, and roles and responsibilities have a direct effect on stress in all models where these variables are included. The higher the rated stressor task or roles and responsibilities, the higher the stress level. At the same time, there is a peculiar situation with the stressor team climate-cooperation. It has a positive relationship with stress, indicating that higher ratings for this stressor lead to lower stress ratings. Comparing these three stressors, roles and responsibilities have a more significant impact on stress with a small effect size. The stressor team climate-leadership has a direct effect on stress in the 2nd model – where the potential impact of respondent age and gender is not considered. The other stressors and all three researched resources in the 2018 sample do not have a direct effect on stress. Of all the moderating relationships, only the resource social support-team significantly influences, reinforcing the impact of the stressor team climate-leadership on stress. Surprisingly, the strongest positive association between Team climate-leadership and stress occurred for respondents who reported a high social support-team, the weakest association occurred for respondents who reported a medium

social support-team, and a negative association was apparent for respondents who reported a low social support-team. According to the f^2 value, the moderation effect of the social support-team is rated as medium (Kenny, 2018).

The results of the 2021 sample show that the stressors roles and responsibilities and attitudes and behaviour have a direct effect on stress in all models where these variables are included. The higher the respective stressor is rated, the higher the stress level. Comparing these two stressors, roles and responsibilities have a more significant impact on stress with a medium effect size. No direct impact on stress was observed for the other stressors, nor for the resources. An exception is the resource control and clarity – it has a direct impact on stress in the 3rd model, i.e., when respondents' age and gender are considered while neglecting moderating relationships, with a small effect size. None of the studied moderations showed a significant impact on the interrelationships between stressors and stress levels.

Summarising the results obtained for 2018 and 2021, it can be concluded that hypotheses 1 and 3 were partially confirmed, while hypothesis 2 was not confirmed.

The complete model based on the 2018-year sample has predictive relevance because all Q-square values are positive (Shmueli et al., 2019). Moreover, RMSE values produced by PLS-SEM for all items of stress are smaller compared to those produced by the linear regression model. Therefore, this model has strong predictive capability. However, the complete model based on the 2021-year sample does not show sufficient predictive relevance, as there is one negative Q-square value (in item "I lose much sleep over worry").

4.3. Multigroup analysis

When comparing path coefficients in the results of the 2018 and 2021 sample for the complete model, it is observed that there is a significant difference in the impact of gender ($p = 0.041$) and the stressor attitudes and behaviour ($p = 0.011$).

Although gender did not significantly impact stress level, in 2018, the tendency for a higher stress level was slightly more pronounced in men, while in 2021, it was the opposite – in women. The stressor attitudes and behaviour significantly impact stress level only in 2021 and, compared to 2018, its path coefficient is considerably higher. When verifying path coefficients in the results of the 2018 and 2021 samples for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd models, no significant differences were found.

5. Conclusions

The exploration of direct influences on stress, notably from variables such as task, attitudes and behaviour, and roles and responsibilities, reveals nuanced insights into workplace dynamics across the years 2018 and 2021. It is imperative to underscore that among stressors, roles and responsibilities emerged as the dominant influence on stress during both years, with a notably heightened impact in 2021. Intriguingly, the stressor team climate-cooperation exhibited an inverse effect in 2018, posing questions on why higher ratings led to lower stress levels, with a notable relation to digital communication.

Contrastingly, several stressors, such as working conditions and workflow, organisational climate and communication, and others, did not exert a direct impact on stress in both sam-

ples, revealing a potential area for further exploration into the discrete influences of these variables. Of all the resources explored, only the social support-team demonstrated significance in 2018, and specifically concerning the impact of Team climate-leadership on Stress, albeit with specific conditions and manifestations.

The insufficient predictive relevance of the complete model based on the 2021 sample necessitates a reflective look into the model's constitution and assumptions, perhaps revisiting the conceptual underpinnings and methodological applications to enhance its predictive utility in future studies.

Surprisingly, the study revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic did not significantly alter the stressor landscape in the examined workplace settings. Despite expectations of heightened disruption due to remote work, social distancing, and rapid digitalization, the key stress-influencing factors identified in 2018 – particularly roles and responsibilities – remained dominant in 2021. Notably, neither the structure nor the significance of stress-reducing resources experienced major shifts. This consistency suggests a certain resilience or adaptation in organizational processes and psychosocial frameworks. Such findings align with research by Ipsen et al. (2021) emphasized that employee stress during COVID-19 was more influenced by managerial behavior and communication than the pandemic itself as well as Kniffin et al. (2021) whose research outlined the effects of remote work and digitalization did not uniformly increase stress levels; instead, the impact was moderated by pre-existing organizational culture and managerial clarity – factors that had already been in place prior to the pandemic.

In the broader discourse on process approaches in the available literature, resources' efficient utilisation, competitive enhancement, and customer satisfaction are often hailed as primary benefits. However, a notable misinterpretation emerges regarding customer satisfaction, often disproportionately focused on external customers, thereby overshadowing the pivotal role of internal clients – the employees. Optimal, well-managed, and transparent processes not only confer organisational benefits but also significantly influence employee well-being within the company, which, in turn, considerably impacts organisational productivity. Hence, addressing process-related issues in a company is paramount, as these significantly influence employee sentiments and attitudes towards work, culminating in a cascade of effects that permeate the broader organisational context.

Study limitations

The study limitation is the geographical focus which being limited to Latvia.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Data availability statement

The participants of this study did not give written consent for their data to be shared publicly, so due to the sensitive nature of the research supporting data is not available.

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