

## **PERVASIVENESS OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES WITH MODERATING ROLE OF MANAGEMENT SUPPORT: EVIDENCE FROM THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Industrial personnel such as workers, junior officers, managers, and executives face considerable levels of occupational psychological distress because of heavy burdens, longer working hours, and time-related demands. The goal of this study was to investigate the aspects that contribute to job stress in nurses and see how top management assistance can help them deal with it. The focus of this research is on “The Pervasiveness of Psychological Distress among Employees with the Moderating Role of Management Support: Evidence from the Manufacturing Sector”. The study had a sample size of 400 employees; data was collected through online questionnaires and was collected by convenient sampling. Result analysis was carried out on SPSS version 21. Correlation analysis and moderated regression analysis were performed to test all formulated hypotheses. It was evident from our analyzed results that moderator i.e. the association between workload and management support is positively moderated by management support, job insecurity, and psychological distress respectively. The limitations to our study were the small sample size and common method bias due to self-report. It was suggested that more research be done using the data, included in this study with the combination of more variables and with increased sample size and using the data provided in strategically planning for similar psychological distress levels.

**KEYWORDS:** Workload, Job insecurity, Management support, psychological distress, Food and beverage, Pakistan.

## INTRODUCTION

Modern work environments expose employees to high demands due to globalization, technological changes, structural reorganizations, and rising economic interdependence, leading to increased psychological distress (Giga & Hoel, 2003). Industrial and service employees working extended hours report higher distress, reduced alertness, disrupted sleep, and greater likelihood of errors (Kushnir & Melamed, 1991). Psychological distress—characterized by negative emotional states, anxiety, and depression—adversely affects work performance and overall well-being, impacting millions globally (Bessaha, 2017; Schultz et al., 2015; Masood, 2013; Lua et al., 2018). Positive work attitudes, job satisfaction, and commitment mitigate distress (Chordiya, Sabharwal & Goodman, 2017; Wersebe et al., 2018).

This study investigates the impact of workload and job insecurity on psychological distress, with management support as a moderating factor. Excessive workload occurs when task demands exceed individual capacity, reducing performance and increasing mental and emotional strain (Hart & Wickens, 1990; Haassard et al., 2018). In Pakistan's food and beverage industries, employees face high workloads without sufficient incentives or support, increasing distress (Ali & Farooqi, 2014; Kushnir & Melamed, 1991).

Job insecurity is a chronic stressor strongly associated with poor mental health, particularly for older employees or those facing prolonged exposure (Fisher, Ryan & Sonnegra, 2015; Fournier et al., 2011; Glavin, 2015). Persistent insecurity predicts depressive symptoms more than short-term insecurity (Burgard et al., 2009; Glavin, 2015). Theoretical frameworks explain these effects through unmet psychological needs (Jahoda, 1982), inadequate coping resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and low perceived control (Mirowsky & Ross, 1990; Warr, 2007). Empirical evidence consistently links perceived job insecurity to psychological distress, even after controlling for job loss (Sverke et al., 2002; De Witte et al., 2016; Kim & von dem Knesebeck, 2015; Brand, 2015).

The Job Demand–Control–Support (JDCS) model further illustrates that high job demands combined with low control and insufficient managerial support exacerbate distress and reduce performance (Karasek, 1979; Brough & Williams, 2007; Alfredsson & Theorell, 1994). Thus, balancing workload, reducing job insecurity, and enhancing management support are essential to mitigating psychological distress among employees.

Psychological distress—a negative emotional state of depression and anxiety with physical and emotional symptoms—is a key indicator of mental disorders and affects cognitive ability, sleep, work performance, absenteeism, and overall well-being (Bessaha, 2017; Marchand, Drapeau & Beaulieu, 2012; Park & Park, 2020). In the food and beverage industry, employees experience high mental strain and reduced productivity due to work-related stressors (Areekkuzhiyil, 2014). Workload has been identified as a significant contributor to psychological distress, with personal and social resources potentially suffering its impact (Alizadeh et al., 2020).

Persistent job insecurity is a chronic stressor that strongly predicts psychological distress, particularly for employees aged mid-30s and above, with long-term effects exceeding those of temporary insecurity (Glavin, 2015). However, most prior studies measured insecurity at limited time points, providing insufficient evidence of its prolonged impact. Early research highlighted employment and job insecurity as critical determinants of health, with subsequent studies confirming the negative effects of perceived job insecurity on psychological well-being, even after controlling for demographic and psychological factors (De Witte, Vander & De Cuyper, 2015; De Witte, Pienaar & De Cuyper, 2016; Kim & von dem Knesebeck, 2015; Burgard & Seelye, 2017).

Despite extensive international evidence, research in Pakistan is limited. No large-scale study has examined psychological distress, workload, and job insecurity among food and beverage employees in both public and private sectors. This study addresses this gap by investigating the impact of workload and job insecurity on psychological distress and the moderating role of management support among 400 respondents, providing insights not previously explored in this context.

### ***Research Questions***

Some of the questions of this research study are as follows:

1. What is the impact of workload on an employee's psychological distress level?
2. What impact of job insecurity has on the psychological distress level of a representative?
3. What is the impact of management support on the workload-psychological distress relationship?
4. What is the impact of management support on the job insecurity-psychological distress relationship?

Food and beverage employees are exposed to high levels of psychological distress due to

demanding workloads and job-related pressures. This study examines the impact of workload and job insecurity on psychological distress and explores the moderating role of management support in mitigating these effects.

By identifying the factors that contribute to occupational psychological distress, the study provides critical insights for early recognition and intervention to improve employee well-being and organizational performance. It emphasizes the importance of management support in helping employees cope with work-related stress.

Furthermore, this research contributes to understanding the unique challenges faced by employees in Pakistan's food and beverage sector, offering evidence-based recommendations to reduce distress and enhance workplace efficiency. The findings can guide interventions, policy-making, and managerial practices to promote mental health in high-stress work environments.

### ***Research Objectives***

Some of the accurate questions of this research study are as follows:

1. The consequences of the relation between workload and psychological distress faced by the employees.
2. The consequences of the impact of job insecurity and psychological distress faced by the representatives.
3. The decision is made to evaluate the combined effect of management support on the relationship between workload and psychological distress.
4. The evaluation of the consolidated impact of top management support on job insecurity- psychological distress relationship.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The Job Demand–Control–Support (JDCS) model (Karasek, 1979) is widely used to explain occupational psychological distress. It comprises job demands (workload and task requirements) and control (employees' ability to influence work pace, methods, and decisions) (Brough & Williams, 2007; Panari et al., 2010). Later, social support from supervisors or organizations was added as a third dimension, forming the Job Demand–Control–Support model (Karasek & Theorell, 1994; Rodwell et al., 2011).

According to this model, high job demands combined with low control increase the risk of negative outcomes, such as reduced performance and dissatisfaction (Dollard & Winefield, 1998; Mansell & Brough, 2005). In Pakistan's food and beverage sector, management can

reduce employee distress by balancing demands with adequate control, confidence-building, and managerial support.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

Psychological distress is defined as the physical, emotional, and cognitive decline arising from a mismatch between job demands and an employee's abilities, resources, and expectations (Akinboye et al., 2002). It occurs when work conditions exceed normal adaptive responses, accumulating over time and affecting physiological and psychological functioning (Giga & Hoel, 2003; Selye, Horn & Quick, 1987). In the food and beverage sector, prolonged distress can lead to fatigue, headaches, emotional exhaustion, burnout, and even severe outcomes such as suicide (Ahmed & Ramzan, 2013; Burke & Deszca, 1986; Sonneck & Wagner, 1996).

Psychological distress is characterized by discomfort, frustration, anxiety, and restlessness arising from an inability to cope with perceived threats (Ridner, 2004; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Workload and job insecurity are key stressors influencing employee mental health. Management support acts as a moderating factor, shaping how employees interpret uncertainty and respond to stress. It reflects enduring work-related values and behaviors, influencing intrinsic or extrinsic motivations and individual reactions to insecurity (Ucanok, 2009; McCauley et al., 1997). Understanding these dynamics clarifies how workload and job insecurity predict psychological distress in industrial contexts.

### ***Workload and Psychological Distress***

Modern industrial workers face a higher risk of depressive symptoms due to excessive psychological distress driven by long hours, managerial pressure, high responsibility, and strict production targets (Kushnir & Melamed, 1991). Continuous evaluation, visible errors, rapid technological changes, and rising quality expectations further exacerbate distress (Dijkhuizen & Reiche, 1980; Alameddine et al., 2009).

Workload is complex to measure, as output is often subjective, and high workload contributes to employee withdrawal, turnover intentions, and health problems (Tahir et al., 2012; Ali & Farooqi, 2014). Surveys indicate that many industrial employees perceive their workload as highly demanding or excessive (Kushnir & Melamed, 1991). Despite its importance, workload lacks a universally accepted definition but is critical for employees' bio-psycho-social functioning (Nwinyokpugi, 2018). It has been identified as a major source of psychological distress, particularly among healthcare and industrial workers (Alizadeh et al.,

2020).

Other contributors to distress include time pressure, on-call duties, night shifts, workplace conflicts, job insecurity, lack of autonomy, unrealistic expectations, and inadequate managerial control (Mackay et al., 1978; Sonneck & Wagner, 1996).

Based on previous literature, it is termed in such studies in such a way that.

**H1: There will be a *significant positive impression of psychological distress***

### ***Job Insecurity and Psychological Distress***

Ashford et al. (1989) defines job insecurity as the extent to which employees perceive their job as threatened and feel powerless to prevent the loss. Although job insecurity is a subjective perception, it significantly influences employees' attitudes and behaviors, even in organizations where no actual layoffs occur. Job insecurity has been shown to negatively affect both individual psychological well-being and organizational outcomes (Sverke, Hellgren & Näswall, 2002).

Studies by Cheng and Chan (2008) and Sverke et al. (2002) demonstrate that high levels of job insecurity adversely affect employees' physical and psychological health. Previous research suggests that the strong relationship between job insecurity and mental health outcomes may be attributed to employees' efforts to cope by maintaining performance and psychological stability to remain valuable to the organization (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984; Sverke et al., 2002). However, behavioral responses to job insecurity are influenced not only by individual factors but also by how organizations support their employees during uncertain periods (Sverke et al., 2002).

Employees experiencing job insecurity often report feelings of powerlessness, alienation, and inadequacy (De Witte, 1999; Sverke et al., 2002). Low perceived control leads individuals to appraise job insecurity as threatening, resulting in negative emotional reactions and increased anxiety (Spector, 2002). Under such conditions, employees may conserve work resources and reduce work engagement, leading to lower job performance (Bakker, van Emmerik & Riet, 2008). Research further indicates that job insecurity affects not only psychosomatic complaints but also physiological health outcomes, including cardiovascular symptoms and hypertension (De Witte, 1999).

Roskies and Louis-Guerin (1990) reported increased utilization of medical services among employees who perceived their jobs as insecure. Longitudinal evidence from a 6.5-year prospective study of approximately 400 middle-aged employees demonstrated that job insecurity independently predicted ischemic heart disease, even after controlling major

physical and behavioral risk factors (Siegrist et al., 1990).

Job insecurity typically triggers stress responses that influence employees either to cope actively or to withdraw. Perceived threats to future employment undermine key life resources such as income, social relationships, opportunities for personal development, and structured daily life, leading to frustration and psychological distress (De Witte et al., 2012). Numerous studies have reported a positive association between perceived job insecurity and psychological distress. Kekesi and Agyemang (2014), using data from 22 European countries, found that job insecurity negatively affected multiple health outcomes, including self-rated health, sickness absence, headaches, eye fatigue, depression, and anxiety.

Burgard, Kalousova and Seefeldt (2012), using data from the Michigan Recession and Recovery Study, found that employees perceiving job insecurity were significantly more likely to report depressive symptoms and anxiety than secure workers, even after adjusting for socio-demographic factors, prior health status, and recent unemployment. These findings highlight the mental health risks faced by employees who remain employed under unstable work conditions.

Fatimah et al. (2012) examined the moderating effects of employment security on job satisfaction and well-being among banking and manufacturing employees affected by the 2008 financial crisis. Their findings revealed that employment security did not moderate the relationship between job security and job satisfaction; however, job security had a direct positive relationship with employee well-being. This suggests that concerns about job continuity, rather than organizational survival, primarily influence employee satisfaction and health.

De Witte et al. (2012) further explored the mediating role of psychological need frustration in the relationship between job insecurity and work-related well-being. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory, their study of 3,185 Flemish employees found that frustration of autonomy, belongingness, and competence mediated the association between job insecurity and emotional exhaustion and vitality. Overall, these studies provide strong evidence that perceived job insecurity undermines psychological well-being and increases psychological distress among employees.

Based on previous literature, it is termed in such studies in such a way that.

**H2: Job Insecurity will have a significant positive impact on psychological distress.**

### ***Moderating Role of Management Support between Workload and Psychological Distress***

Psychological distress arises from employees' responses to workplace factors that threaten



well-being, causing both physiological and psychological strain (Jamal, 1990). Approximately 22% of industrial workers report psychological distress, which contributes significantly to sickness absence, with workplace conditions as a primary cause (European Working Conditions Survey, 2005; Kushnir & Melamed, 1991).

Labor shortages and extended working hours intensify workload and production demands. Key predictors of occupational distress include work-home conflict, task demands, managerial expectations, and organizational structure (Krohe, 1999; Akinboye et al., 2002). Other contributors include role conflict, loss of control, poor working conditions, and strained colleague relationships (Borg & Falzon, 1991).

Managerial support mitigates psychological distress by providing necessary resources and social support, reducing depression, emotional exhaustion, and physical health issues such as high blood pressure and musculoskeletal disorders (Bultmann et al., 2002; Karlin et al., 2003; Elfering et al., 2002). Strong top management support improves task performance and buffers employees from work-related stress (Giauque & Biget, 2013; Sonneck & Wagner, 1996; Munro et al., 1998; Wells, Roberts & Medlin, 2002).

Based on previous literature, it is termed in such studies in such a way that.

***H3: Management support moderates the connection of workload with psychological distress, so that this connection will be feeble when the board support is high.***

#### ***Moderating Role of Management Support between Job Insecurity and Psychological Distress:***

Support at work reflects the quality of social interactions between management and coworkers (Munro et al., 1998). Job insecurity is subjective, shaped by employees' perceptions of job loss likelihood and severity of consequences (De Witte, 1999; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002; Klandermans et al., 1991). Even under identical conditions, employees may experience and react to insecurity differently.

Employees face multiple tasks and must continually update skills, making management support critical for coping with workplace demands (Kushnir & Melamed, 1991). Managerial support—including control, understanding, and reassurance—enhances job satisfaction, productivity, and successful return to work (Steinhardt et al., 2003; Kant et al., 2008; Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002). Social support from managers buffers employees from stress and improves well-being (Munro et al., 1998).

Following Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984), this study examines management support as a



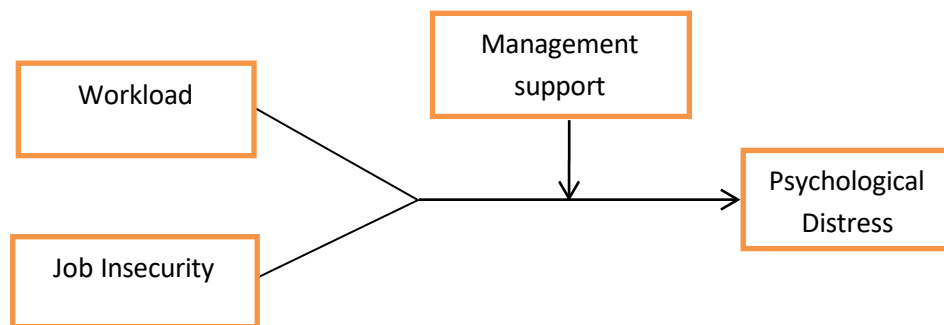
moderator between perceived job insecurity and psychological distress. Management support reflects enduring values guiding attitudes and behavior (Schwartz, 1992; Ball-Rokeach & Rokeach, 1989; Burgess et al., 2001) and shapes employees' interpretation of changes in the psychological contract (Arciniega & Gonzalez, 2005; Selmer & Waldstrom, 2007). Employees prioritizing extrinsic rewards are particularly vulnerable to insecurity, as uncertainty about pay, promotion, or status increases psychological distress. Despite theoretical support, few studies have empirically tested managerial support as a moderator in this context.

Based on previous literature, it can be hypothesized that.

**H4: Management support moderates this connection between job insecurity and psychological distress in the term that this connection will be weak in case of high management support.**

#### **Research Model**

As discussed earlier, the study of this research work has a purpose for the identification of consequences in case of workload and job insecurity on the psychological distress of employees working in the manufacturing sector along with the moderation of management support. Thus, according to the research findings, our proposed research model is drawn below.



**Figure 1. Proposed Research Model: Pervasiveness of psychological distress among employees along with the moderation role of management support: Evidence from the manufacturing sector**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

This part explains the total exploration approach used to accomplish the targets of the proposition.

The review configuration is depicted exhaustively.

### ***Research Design***

The philosophy section takes a gander at turning into an essential strategy or method for sorting out, picking, contemplating, and seeing substance data. The strategic fragment of such logical investigations empowers the watcher to evaluate the general viability and dependability of the examination (AlKilani, 2016).

### ***Type of study***

The reason for the exploration is to break down and study the predominance of psychological distress among representatives working in food and refreshment areas with workload and occupation frailty, with the board support going about as a mediator. The methods utilized and saw eventually of the review's technique are characterized in this section of the review paper. This insolvency examined strategic strategies, a portion of the general population and enlistment methods, testing systems, and perception issue aspects. The examination technique is the actual premise of studies that demonstrates the general attitude toward works of art. It is furthermore sooner than how the workforce finds deliberately to accomplish the glance at objectives. An examination task's thought, approach, designs, and related parts are undeniably included inside the overview's-based pyramid.

### ***Study setting***

It is field preparation because members, for example, laborers, junior officials, chiefs, and leaders will be called to work to finish inquiries in their typical work setting. The members in this study were food and refreshment experts working in different assembling settings, and the measurements were together in different food and beverage producing areas of Pakistan. The districts were picked because of the creator's attainability. The review led to "Pervasiveness of psychological distress among employees with moderating role of management support: Evidence from the manufacturing sector", which was led inside the period indicated. The information was accumulated in a cross-sectional way. All information connected with the many elements picked, including psychological distress, job insecurity, workload as well as top management support, were gathered simultaneously, and to assort and finish for consistency. The information for the research study was accumulated throughout the research.

### ***Time Horizon***

After the finish of the review, individuals have been associated through different mediums as referred to previously. The data combination cycle could reach out if it is about a month and a half and is cross-sectional. Individuals have been offered a satisfactory chance to complete their responses, at last enabling the grouping of a more trustworthy dataset.

### ***Research Interference***

Information was gathered in two ways; physically and through a web-based survey. For ease, laborers are given structures in hard structures to fill the survey in straightforward language. Members, for example, junior officials, supervisors, and chiefs were given web-based surveys. Google Forms were utilized to make polls. An introductory letter was incorporated into the poll offered, stressing the employees' intentional contribution. Privacy was additionally tended to. Besides, online information gathering brings down one-sided reactions since members have adequate opportunities to evaluate the results such as not being impacted by the sidekicks or these specialists. The research work gathers information from cross-section studies.

### ***Analytical Unit***

The study of the analytic component is food and beverage experts, consisting of workers, junior officers, managers, and executives working in the private and public divisions, across the various firms in Pakistan. Furthermore, the author found the food and beverage employees in different cities of Pakistan to be more friendly.

### **Population and Sampling**

#### ***Population***

Members of this exploration are food and beverage experts from Pakistan's public and confidential areas. Since it was difficult to assess the whole populace, information was accumulated from a delegate test that showed the qualities of the whole populace.

#### ***Sampling Technique***

The Convenient sampling method was utilized, and the idea of full classification and investment was deliberate.

#### ***Sampling***

Because of advantageous testing, a suitable number of polls considering the populace size

were circulated among the different undertaking-based associations. With the assistance of different undertaking- based associations. The overview included food and drink proficiency from private and public assembling areas working together in offices like R and D, Quality Assurance, Quality Control, Microbiology, Production, Electrical, IT, Mechanical, Pest Control, HR, Finance, Store, Issue Dispatch and other related regions.

### **Data Collection Technique**

Surveys were the primary data collection method used in this study. A pre-designed questionnaire was customized for research objectives and approved by the university prior to distribution. Participants could choose between written or oral responses, though most responded via an online survey platform. Questionnaires were distributed to employees in selected food and beverage sectors using Google Forms and shared through social platforms such as WhatsApp, Gmail, Yahoo Mail, and LinkedIn. Collected data was organized in Microsoft Excel and later imported into SPSS version 22 for cleaning and analysis. After ensuring proper coding and removing incomplete or inconsistent responses, the dataset was prepared in Smart-PLS version 3 for further statistical and structural modeling.

### ***Data collection & sample size***

Food and beverage professionals in Pakistan experience significant psychological distress, anxiety, and stress due to challenging work environments. Given financial, social, and logistical constraints, surveying the entire population was impractical (Maranda et al., 2020). Therefore, a representative sample was drawn using a purposive random sampling method. Data was collected from employees in both public and private food and beverage firms through a combination of manual and online surveys. A total of 400 responses were received, establishing a sample size of 400 participants for the study.

### ***Response rate***

That is because the reviews were conveyed to the review's members or volunteers utilizing overview surveys or structures, and the all-out number of answered or submitted polls was 400, which were all finished precisely and capable.

### ***Research Instrument***

Essential information (data got gathered through a poll) was gathered utilizing study inquiries to finish this quantitative examination project. A pre-organized survey was utilized as a technique. This has proactively been referred to in peer-surveyed diaries. It was taken on and

adjusted to meet the limit of the assembling area and to further develop food and beverage workers' comprehension. The segment measures ensnared in the following information assortment cost are race and age concerning gender jobs and in years respectively. Just these factors and the related measuring tools have without a doubt been summed up in table 1.

**Table 1. Research Instruments**

No	Variable	No of items
1	Demographics	Age, Gender, education, designation
2	Psychological distress	10 items
3	Workload	10 items
4	Job insecurity	06 items
5	Management support	07 items

### Measures/Scales of Variables Used

In this review, the research incorporates 04 elements in affirming normal speculation of the significance in terms of the relationship between psychological distress and representatives with workload and job insecurity, along with the impact comprising of the executive's help. A bunch of satisfactory scales from past investigations were taken on for every variable's aspect. The following areas go over these scales exhaustively.

#### *Demographic variables*

The socio-segment characteristics are money-related and educational records being used to look at a player's personality and social history (Al Kilani, 2016). In fundamental assessment examinations, those relevant parts are sometimes given off an impression of being as recently experienced. This perception's segment boundaries safeguarded age, orientation, capability, and assignment.

#### *Workload*

Members' workload was surveyed utilizing a 10-thing scale made by Karassik R, Brisson C, Kawakami N, Houtman I, and Bongers Amuck B. "My occupation expects me to buckle down" for instance. This scale's Cronbach's alpha was found to be .791. This information was assembled via web- based poll reactions. The survey includes the measuring angles along with other supporting things pertinent to the socioeconomics of the employees, like orientation, assignment, capability, and age. Every scoring thing was evaluated through a 1-5 Likert measuring scale. The lower value on the measuring scale is 1, which means that the most extreme degree of concurrence is against the given statement, whereas the most noteworthy gathering is 5, the increased level of conflict is shown by the predefined decree.

Whereas 2, 3 along with 4 demonstrated arrangement, lack of bias, and conflict individually.

### ***Job Insecurity***

Job insecurity of members was estimated utilizing 6 things scale question created by Pienaar et al. (2013). Test thing included "I'm exceptionally certain that I will want to keep my work." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was viewed as .854. The surveys covered scale highlights as well as additional things crucial for the employees' socioeconomics, like orientation, age, assignment, and capability. According to the 1 to 5 Likert scale, the score thing was being evaluated. The number at the end that was merged in the scale that is 1, showed that concurrence is on the peak there against the provided declaration, whereas the most noteworthy gathering, that is 5, demonstrated that conflict is on peak against given articulation. Whereas 2, 3, along with 4 numbers were addressed arrangement, lack of bias, and conflict individually.

### ***Psychological Distress***

Psychological distress was estimated utilizing the 10 things scale created by Kessler et al. (2002). "In the past 4 weeks, about how often did you feel tired out for no good reason?" The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was viewed as .881. The highlights of scale that the poll contains along with additional things pertinent to socioeconomics contained by the employees, like orientation, assignment, capability along with age. These scoring things had been shown by the 1-5 measuring instrument. The minimal number with the lowest value contained by the scale was 1, showed constantly with the respective declarations offered, while the most elevated bunch, 5, demonstrated none of the time with the given explanation. While 2, 3, and 4 are connoted often, a portion of the time and a tad bit of the time individually.

### ***Management support***

Management support was estimated utilizing the 7-thing scale created by Pattanayak and Maddulety (2013). Test thing included "Top Management is giving satisfactory asset and time to quality improvement endeavors." The Cronbach's alpha for this scale was viewed as .736. The poll incorporates scale components as well as additional things appropriate to the employees' socioeconomics, like orientation, age, assignment, and capability. According to the 1 to 5 Likert scale, every scoring thing was evaluated. The scale showed the least number as 1 which is the best measure of concurrence against the introduced declaration, whereas the most elevated bunch is demonstrated as 5, which showed the best degree of conflict against

the given affirmation. Whereas these numbers 2 along with 4 meant understanding, nonpartisanship, and conflict separately.

### **Testing of Survey Instrument**

Every investigation challenge twirls around surveying a fundamental idea, settling an issue of the survey, or confirming speculation. The researcher picks ramifications of estimations or markers to achieve this soul view target. Factors are the names given to those model elements. Further, every limit is created utilizing a lot of pointers suggested as perspective scales or survey contraptions. It is crucial to choose whether the relevant variable is gotten through these review developments. Several of the best prestigious real analysis was done in affirming and endorsing the understanding of limits through pointer or evaluation of test length. The following two tests show unwavering quality along with legitimacy investigation.

#### ***Reliability of survey instruments***

This check is being used in assessing the secret faithful quality and perfection of occasions. It has also been used to survey whether a selected term real factors series contraptions are strong and precisely assess prognosticator and by and large results (Mohamad, Sulaiman, Sern & Salleh, 2015). Cronbach's Alpha level is utilized to check out the inner steady quality or consistency of a pointer. Eventually, the inspiration for Cronbach's Alpha is 0.60. Others with lower values are thought of as problematic, while those with developing characteristics are viewed as stronger. They raised the figure above 0.60, they raised the Cronbach's Alpha and consistency record.

### **Unit of Analysis**

The examining unit is a bunch of qualities for a specific segment wherein the specialist wishes to study and is currently being concentrated on in research. This exploration undertaking's unit of examination is representatives who work in different private and public food and beverage sectors in Pakistan. The interaction of workload and job insecurity against the psychological distress of employees was examined using this assembling faculty as the unit of study. The testing unit has a lot of characteristics for a particular portion where the researcher wishes to survey and is presently being focused on in research. This investigation undertaking's unit of assessment is who works out in the private and public food and beverage sectors in Pakistan. The impact of job insecurity and workload on the psychological distress level of representatives utilizing this manufacturing workforce as the unit of study.



### ***Control variables***

For this review, to represent contrasts in the concentrate on factors, a one-way ANOVA was utilized, specifically workload and occupation weakness with mental trouble, which is the Dependent Variable, considering socioeconomics like orientation, age, and schooling. For this examination, the One- way ANOVA test was utilized to guarantee the rightness, accuracy, and consistency of information.

### ***Data analysis procedure***

Data was collected online, compiled in Microsoft Excel, and imported into SPSS version 22 for analysis. After coding, the dataset was screened for missing values, outliers, and reverse-coded items. Responses were recorded on a 5-point Likert scale: for workload, job insecurity, and management support (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), and for psychological distress (1 = always to 5 = never). Smart-PLS was used for measurement model evaluation, reliability tests, and structural model analysis, including moderation and mediation assessments. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, correlation, and regression analyses were conducted, and scale reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Socio-demographics were analyzed using frequency distributions and means and standard deviations were calculated to support hypothesis testing.

## **RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

The information examination and determined outcome from the got information are remembered for this section of the exploration study. SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) variant 21 programming is used for information investigation. One-way ANOVA testing, unwavering quality testing, the examination will incorporate segment recurrence investigation, connection, and relapse investigation, and intervened and directed relapse examination.

### ***Demographics of sample***

Age, orientation, schooling, and assignment were the segment factors examined in this examination. The recurrence appropriation of socioeconomics seen in the study was disclosed in the chief piece of this part. Direction, age, intimate level, either the employees were young people, the work is being used, and that division that was headed was unquestionably assessed in economics.

### *Gender of employees*

The frequencies and paces of direction movement are shown in the table underneath. As indicated by the consequences of the research work, out of 400 employees, 174 were men and 226 were women, for a speed of 56.5 percent of women and 43.5 percent of folks. Women agents overshadowed men specialists, according to our disclosures.

**Table 2. Gender of employees.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Male</b>	174	43.5	43.5	43.5
<b>Female</b>	226	56.5	56.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	400	100.0	100.0	

### *Age of employees*

The employees in the study went in age range from 18 to 65. The different decision questions permitted employees to pick between three age ranges: fewer than 25, 26-49, and more than 50. Table 3. shows the recurrence conveyance of members' ages.

The mind-boggling extent of individuals (48.5%) was between the ages of 26 and 49 while the extent of individuals under 25 years is 26.8%. Because of their accessibility during the overemphasized workload period in summer because of creation concerns, more employees between 25-49 years were available, while senior representatives and under 25 years workers were less accessible because of their expert exercises and acquiring experience exercises after newly graduation separately. Subsequently, employees matured to 50 and represent 24.8% of all employees.

**Table 3. Age of employees.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>elow 25 years</b>	107	26.8	26.8	26.8
<b>25-49 years</b>	194	48.5	48.5	75.3
<b>50 years and above</b>	99	24.8	24.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	400	100.0	100.0	

### *Education of employees*

In our internet-based survey structure, we determined a couple of training rules, and employees needed to show which prerequisite they adjusted accordingly. They contained 04 degrees of study accessible: Matric, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral. Table 4. shows the recurrence of employees' positions. There the necessity of bosses contained 34.8 percent of the dispersion, while people with single guys level capabilities made up 33.5 percent of the dissemination. We have 26.5 percent matric employees and 5.3 percent Ph.D. employees out

of 400.

**Table 4. Education of employees**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Matric</b>	106	26.5	26.5	26.5
<b>Bachelors</b>	134	33.5	33.5	60.0
<b>Masters</b>	139	34.8	34.8	94.8
<b>PHD</b>	21	5.3	5.3	100.0
<b>Total</b>	400	100.0	100.0	

#### **Designation of employees**

In our web-based poll structure, we determined a couple of training standards, and employees needed to show which prerequisite they fit into. There were four degrees of occupation assignment accessible: Worker, junior official, supervisor, and chief. Table 5. shows the recurrence of employees' positions. There the necessity of junior officials contained 47.3 percent of the conveyance, while people with supervisor assignments made up 40.3 percent of the appropriation. We have 8.8 percent specialist- assigned employees and 3.8 percent chief-assigned employees out of 400.

**Table 5. Designation of employees.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Worker</b>	35	8.8	8.8	8.8
<b>Junior Officer</b>	189	47.3	47.3	56.0
<b>Manager</b>	161	40.3	40.3	96.3
<b>Executive</b>	15	3.8	3.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>	400	100.0	100.0	

#### **Reliability Analysis**

The reliability of the scales utilized in the review is checked and reported utilizing dependability examination. Table 4.6.1 presents the inferred Cronbach's alpha qualities for each scale, including mental pain, work frailty, the board backing, and workload. Psychological distress has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.881, while job insecurity has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.854. Table 6. shows Cronbach's alpha qualities for administrative help and workload, which are 0.736 and 0.791, correspondingly.

**Table 6. Reliability analysis.**

Variables	Cronbach's alpha
Psychological Distress Job Stress	0.881
Job Insecurity Management Support	0.791
	0.854
	0.736

### One-way ANOVA analysis

One-way ANOVA was used to adapt to contrasts in the reliant variable, Psychological Distress, and the Moderator, Management Support, connected with segment factors like employees' orientation, age, capability, and assignment. Table 7. shows the norms got in this manner doing the One-way ANOVA test. This study uncovered tremendous contrasts in mental pain (DV) across age ( $F=2.157$ ,  $P=.117$ ), orientation ( $F=.708$ ,  $P=.401$ ), capability ( $F=.850$ ,  $P=.467$ ), and assignment ( $F=.850$ ,  $P=.467$ ) The outcomes for the mediator variable, the executives support (MS), showed huge fluctuation across age ( $F=3.981$ ,  $P=.109$ ), orientation ( $F=6.567$ ,  $P=.101$ ), capability ( $F=1.084$ ,  $P=.356$ ) and assignment ( $F=1.780$ ,  $P=.150$ ),

**Table 7. One-way ANOVA**

Psychological Distress (PD) (MS)			Management	Support
Source of variation	F statistics	P-value	F-statistics	P-value
Gender	.708	.401	6.567	.101
Qualification	.850	.467	1.084	.356
Designation	2.512	.058	1.780	.150
Age	2.157	.117	3.981	.109

### Correlation Analysis

The connection examination is led to recognizing its relationship among the factors in the examination. Table 8. presents the qualities gathered for every relationship. The review determined the connection or relationship between workload and psychological distress, job insecurity and psychological distress, and workload and job insecurity with the management support going about as a moderator. As per speculation 1, there was a huge positive relationship (.54,  $p=0.000$ ) between the workload and psychological distress, which was normal. In any case, job insecurity was found to have no level of relationship with psychological distress (.04,  $p=ns$ ), which is in opposition to speculation 2. On the other hand, It was uncovered that top management support had a critical positive relationship (.41,  $p=0.000$ ) with the workload, supporting speculation 3; the connection was supposed to be positive. However, the management support was found to have no level of relationship with job insecurity (-.01,  $p=ns$ ), which is in opposition to theory 4. Speculation 1 is upheld by a huge positive connection between psychological distress and management support (.26,  $p=0.000$ ). A significant positive connection (.02,  $p=ns$ ) between job insecurity and the

workload was distinguished, which is in opposition to speculation 4, which anticipated a positive huge connection.

**Table 8. Correlation Analysis.**

Variables	WL	JI	MS	PD
1. WL				
2. JI	.02ns			
MS	.41*	-.01ns		
PD	.54*	.04ns	.26*	

\*p<.05, ns=Not Significant, WL= Workload, JI= Job Insecurity, MS= Management Support,

PD= Psychological Distress.

## Regression analysis

### 5.9.1 Linear regression of workload and Job Insecurity

Relapse examination was utilized as the last move toward the outcome investigation, and it is utilized to assess all speculations that have been proposed. Andrew F. Hayes' Process v 3.3 was utilized for the directed relapse examination, and SPSS was utilized for the straight relapse. Tables 9. confirm the consequences of the direct and directed relapse investigations, individually.

**Table 9. Association of workload and Job insecurity with psychological distress.**

### Psychological Distress

Predictors	$\Delta R^2$	B	p-value
WL	0.293	0.681	0.000*
JI	0.002	0.30ns	0.475

WL=Workload, JI=Job Insecurity, ns=Non-Significant, \*p<0.05

According to the data in Table 9. linear regression between workload and job insecurity with management support as a moderator showed a significant positive value for workload whereas no significant value for job insecurity indicating that hypothesis 1 was intended to be positively significant is accepted and hypothesis 2 was intended to be not significant is rejected.

As per the information in Table 9. direct relapse among workload and job insecurity with the management support as a moderator showed a huge positive incentive for workload though no critical incentive for job insecurity demonstrated that speculations 1 was planned to be emphatically huge is acknowledged and theory 2 was expected to be not critical is not

accepted.

### ***Moderated regression analysis***

At long last, because our examination included a moderating variable, we employed moderated regression. The results of moderated regression are displayed in Table 10., Table 11. and Graph 1.

### ***Moderation of management support between workload and psychological distress***

In the extra stage, we investigated the connection between the autonomous variable, responsibility (WL), and the reliant variable, mental misery (PD). There was a significant positive affiliation ( $p=0.000$ ) between the two factors, and the results revealed that a unit adjustment in the free factor changes the reliant variable. In continuation with stage two, we analyzed the relationship between Moderator, for example, the board backing, and responsibility and mental trouble, ss in this research IV and DV, individually. It was viewed as a significant connection between directing the selected term and the reliant variable.

At the third level, we determined the coordinated effort form, which is the result of IV, and the mediator, which is the responsibility and the board support. At that point, we took a gander at the connection between the communication as well as the directing term, that was the board support. These consequences of this investigation found indicated a significant moderate affiliation. The outcome is shown the directing term, the executive's support, directs the extensively certain connection between autonomous term, responsibility, and the reliant term, mental pain; that is supporting our formulated Speculation 3.

***Table 10. Moderated regression analysis of workload and management support***

Predictor	Coeff	$\Delta R^2$	T value	p value	LLCI	ULCI
WL	1.41		7.66	0.000	1.054	1.178
MS	0.85		4.36	0.000	0.469	1.236
W x MS	-0.34	0.031	-4.29	0.000	-0.507	-1.188

WL=Workload, MS= Management Support

### ***Moderation of management support between job insecurity and psychological distress***

In the initial step of control relapse, we analyzed the association between the autonomous variable, job insecurity (JI), and the reliant variable, psychological distress (PD). There was found no level of affiliation ( $p= 0.413$  ns) between the two factors, and these results have

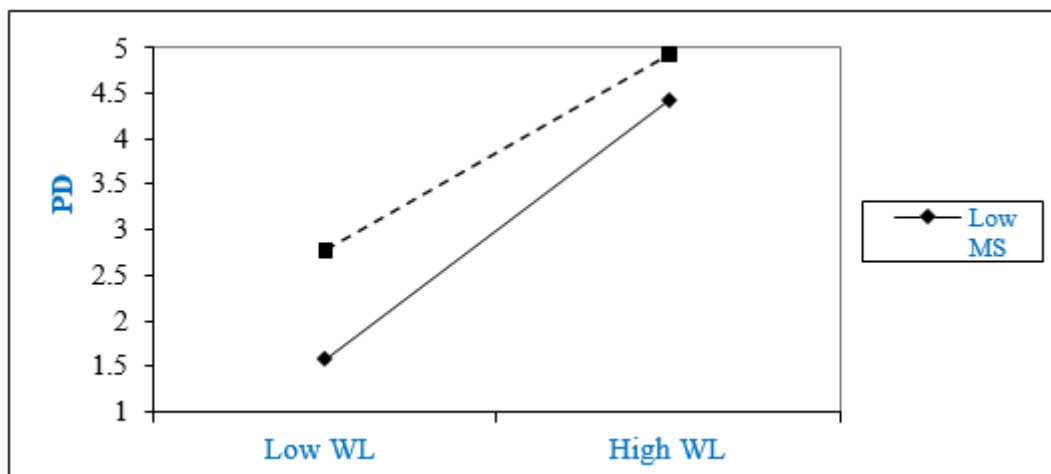
shown that an element change in an autonomous term didn't substitute the reliant term. In progression with stage two, it was analyzed the connection between the Moderator, the top management support as well as connections between job insecurity and psychological distress, which are our IV and DV, individually. There was tracked down no significant relationship between the directing variable and the reliant variable.

In the third stage, we determined the collective effort term, the result of IV, and the moderator, which are job insecurity and management support. Then, at that point, we took a gander at the connection between the collaboration term and the directing variable, the management support. The results of the examination found that there was no significant helpful affiliation. These outcomes showed that the Moderating variable, the executive's support, didn't moderate the significant relationship among the Independent variable, work frailty, other than the reliant variable, mental trouble, which is in opposition to our proposed Hypothesis 4.

**Table 11. Moderated regression analysis of Job insecurity and management support**

Predictor	Coeff	$\Delta R^2$	T value	p value	LICI	UICI
JI	-0.177		-0.819	0.413	-0.601	0.247
MS	0.142		0.740	0.459	-0.23	0.519
JI x MS	0.089	0.0026	1.050	0.294	-.0.078	0.257

JI= Job Insecurity, MS= Management Support



**Graph 1. Moderated regression Graph.**

**Moderated regression Graph** for management support between workload and Psychological Distress.



PD=*Psychological Distress*, WL =*Workload*, MS=*Management Support*

***Hypotheses accepted and rejected in the summary***

1. In the regression examination, the primary speculation, that there are areas of strength for a relationship between the free factor, workload (WL), and the reliant variable, psychological distress (PD), was supported.
2. The second speculation, that there is a huge positive relationship between the free factor, job insecurity (JI), and the reliant variable, psychological distress, was not acknowledged because of regression analysis.
3. The third speculation, there exists a huge positive association between the directing variable, the management support (MS), and workload and psychological distress, was acknowledged in the regression examination.
4. The fourth speculation there exists no huge association between the directing variable, the management support (MS), and job insecurity and psychological distress, was not acknowledged in the regression examination.

**DISCUSSION**

Individuals respond differently to stress, influenced by personal perceptions, experiences, and expectations. Work-related stress arises when employees face conflicts or mismatches between their abilities and organizational demands, leading to discouragement, exhaustion, and psychological distress.

This study examined the relationships between workload, job insecurity, management support, and psychological distress among employees in Pakistan's food and beverage industry. Results show a significant positive relationship between workload and psychological distress, confirming that excessive job demands increase mental strain. In contrast, job insecurity did not significantly predict psychological distress in this context. Importantly, management support emerged as a protective factor: employees receiving strong managerial support reported lower stress levels, better adjustment, and greater workplace comfort, highlighting its buffering effect against work-related stressors.

**Hypothesis 1.** proposed a positive relationship between workload and psychological distress, suggesting that higher workload increases employee stress. Regression and correlation analyses supported this hypothesis, confirming that workload significantly influences psychological distress.

Consistent with prior research, excessive responsibility, high job demands, and extended

work hours contribute to elevated stress and reduced job satisfaction (Lea, Corlett & Rodgers, 2012; Sonneck & Wagner, 1996). Similar patterns are observed in healthcare and service industries, where workload, night shifts, and client demands intensify work-related stress (Gebrekidan, Tesefa & Tareke, 2018; Almendra, 2010).

In Pakistan's food and beverage sector, employees face high service pressures and additional responsibilities, further increasing workload and psychological distress (Cudjoe, 2015; Jennings, 2008). These findings support the job strain hypothesis, indicating that high job demands directly contribute to work-related strain (Karasek, 1979).

**Hypothesis 2.** was developed to examine the relationship between the independent variable job insecurity (JI) and the dependent variable psychological distress (PD). Based on previous literature, it was expected that higher levels of perceived job insecurity would be associated with greater psychological distress. However, the findings of this study did not support the proposed hypothesis. Both correlation and regression analyses indicated that job insecurity had no significant relationship with psychological distress among employees in the food and beverage sector.

This result contrasts with earlier studies, which consistently found that perceived job insecurity negatively affects employees' mental health (Sverke et al., 2002; Burgard, Kalousova & Seefeldt, 2012; De Witte et al., 2012). In our study, the lack of a significant association may be explained by the specific work context: employees reported experiencing stress primarily due to high workload, workplace conflicts, insufficient leave, and challenging work environments, rather than fears of losing their jobs. In other words, job insecurity was not a prominent concern for employees in the participating organizations, and thus, it did not contribute to psychological distress in this sample.

These findings suggest that, in stable employment settings where job security is perceived to be adequate, other organizational stressors—such as workload, interpersonal conflicts, and limited resources— may play a more central role in influencing psychological distress.

The leader's help was picked as a coordinating variable for this assessment. In **Hypothesis 3.** It was ensured that our mediator, the administration support (MS), moderates a positive connection between our free component, responsibility, and our dependent variable, mental misery (PD). The revelations of our directed relapse examination upheld our speculation, and our moderator directs areas of strength for disturbing these free and subordinate factors; that is, a flood in the directing variable keeps an ever- evolving connection between workload and psychological distress. As per the best of our comprehension, there is no such prior investigation that has been distributed that has investigated the blend of these attributes

comparable to these connections, especially while concentrating on medical attendants. In any case, there are aberrant confirmations that could supply us with accommodating information. We can choose from the offered undeniable assessments and molded results that organization support coordinates the gigantic positive connection between responsibility and mental pain, regardless of how there is less composition to interface with.

**Hypothesis 4.** indicates that the chief's help was picked as a coordinating variable in this investigation assessment. Hypothesis 3 ensured that our mediator, the administration support (MS), intervene in a positive association between our free element, work uncertainty, and our dependent variable, mental misery (PD). The results of our directed relapse examination didn't uphold our speculation, and, our moderator, management support, didn't moderate a valuable relationship among our free and subordinate factors, which has no importance in the directing variable development of the connection between job insecurity and psychological distress. Regarding the creators' information, neither existing review has been given, which has explored the ideal mix of these attributes according to any of these affiliations, especially for workers. Additionally, there appear to be casual lines of proof that give a lot of significant information. We might finish up from the offered authentic investigations and shaped results that management support didn't moderate the extensive relationship between job insecurity and psychological distress, despite the way that there is more writing to connect with.

### ***Practical implications:***

This study offers several practical insights into food and beverage organizations:

1. **Workload Management:** Employee workload significantly contributes to stress. Departments such as production, quality control, and process management should monitor task allocation, balance workloads, and hire additional staff when needed to reduce psychological distress.
2. **Management Support:** Supportive supervisors create positive work environments, enhancing employee well-being. Training programs can strengthen supervisors' ability to provide consistent support, while ensuring employees do not become overly dependent on colleagues.
3. **HR Strategies:** The findings inform HR policies and interventions, including:
  - Stress management programs focused on workload distribution, task prioritization, and teamwork.
  - Work-life balance policies and provision of adequate resources.

- Regular training and workshops to improve management support skills.
4. **Ongoing Evaluation:** Continuous assessment of employee support systems and work environments helps identify stress-reducing factors, fostering higher morale, satisfaction, and overall performance.

Overall, these findings guide practical interventions to create healthier, more productive workplaces in the food and beverage sector.

## CONCLUSIONS

### *Study limitations*

Every research study has inherent limitations that should be acknowledged. This study faced several challenges, including data collection constraints, budget restrictions, and limited participant availability, which may have affected the scope and generalizability of the findings.

The sample size was limited due to strict deadlines, COVID-19 restrictions, and employee absenteeism. Data was collected using a cross-sectional design and non-probability convenience sampling, which limits representativeness. Online self-reported data may have introduced method bias, and the focus on employees in the food and beverage sector restricts generalizability to other industries.

All variables were measured at a single point in time, preventing causal inferences between workload, job insecurity, management support, and psychological distress. Responses may also have been influenced by current work dissatisfaction or pandemic-related stressors.

Future research should consider longitudinal designs, probability sampling, and mixed method approaches to improve reliability, generalizability, and the depth of understanding of these relationships.

### *Future research*

The cross-sectional design of this study limits causal inferences between workload, job insecurity, management support, and psychological distress. Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to examine how these variables evolve over time.

The use of convenience sampling may have introduced self-selection bias, as participants most affected by stress may have been more likely to respond. Probability sampling is recommended to improve representativeness.

As this study relied solely on quantitative methods, underlying reasons for participants' experiences could not be deeply explored. Qualitative or mixed-method approaches could

provide richer insights into the factors influencing psychological distress.

Future studies should target larger and more diverse samples, including various food and beverage roles (e.g., brewers, process controllers, housekeeping, administrative staff) across multiple cities or regions in Pakistan to enhance generalizability.

Additional variables, such as organizational culture, employee resilience, or coping strategies, could be examined as potential mediators or moderators to better understand complex relationships. Incorporating open-ended questions may also capture employees' perspectives and suggestions.

Finally, adopting rigorous designs, broader samples, and mixed methods will help verify and extend these findings, providing actionable strategies to reduce workplace stress and improve management support.

### ***Study conclusions***

The findings of this study indicate that workload is a significant source of work-related stress for employees in Pakistan's food and beverage industry. Adequate organizational resources, such as clearly defined job roles and effective management support, can help employees cope with high workloads and mitigate psychological distress. The positive relationship between workload and psychological distress underscores the critical role of supervisory and peer support in managing employee stress. However, the presence of certain adverse effects suggests that interventions may not always be equally effective across all situations.

The study also found that job insecurity did not have a significant impact on psychological distress, and management support did not moderate the relationship between job insecurity and distress in this context.

Overall, the research highlights the importance of management support as a key factor in buffering the effects of workload on psychological distress. The findings provide actionable insights for designing organizational strategies, improving emergency preparedness, and planning employee training programs. By addressing workload and enhancing management support, organizations can effectively reduce stress levels and improve overall employee well-being.

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