

Research Paper

Under Pressure and Underserved: Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, and the Invisible Workforce of Egyptian Hotels

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ABSTRACT

Women hotel workers are central to Egypt's rapidly expanding tourism sector, yet their occupational well-being remains poorly understood. This cross-sectional study examines whether occupational stress predicts job satisfaction among women employed in Egyptian hotels, and whether stress levels differ by role. Occupational stress was a significant negative predictor of job satisfaction, though the relationship was weaker than comparable Western research would suggest. This attenuation may reflect cultural factors, including collectivist norms, high power distance, and faith-based and familial support networks, that shape how workplace pressure is experienced in this context, though this remains to be formally tested. Stress also varied considerably across roles, with culinary workers reporting the highest levels and housekeeping staff the lowest. These findings highlight the limitations of applying Western occupational stress frameworks uncritically in non-Western settings and underscore the need for role-specific, culturally informed approaches to workforce well-being in Egypt's hotel sector.

Keywords: *Occupational Stress, Job Satisfaction, Women, Egypt, Hospitality*

Egypt stands at a remarkable juncture in its tourism history. With the government targeting 30 million international visitors annually by 2030 (Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2023), tourism contributing approximately 8.5% of gross domestic product in 2024 and supporting nearly 2.7 million jobs (World Travel and Tourism Council [WTTC], 2025), and the November 2025 inauguration of the Grand Egyptian Museum, widely described as the world's largest museum dedicated to a single civilization (Ali et al., 2020; Vaughan, 2026), the country's hospitality sector is expanding at a pace and scale without modern precedent. Hotels sit at the center of this transformation. They are not simply places of accommodation; they are the primary interface between Egypt's cultural heritage and the international visitors who travel to experience it, and the quality of that

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interface depends, more than any marketing campaign or architectural achievement, on the human beings who staff them. Yet the psychological conditions under which Egypt's hotel workers operate have received almost no empirical attention, a striking omission given both the scale of the sector's ambitions and the well-established consequences of occupational distress for the quality of service it seeks to deliver.

Occupational stress, one of the most extensively researched phenomena in the organizational psychology and hospitality management literatures, has been consistently shown in Western contexts to undermine job satisfaction, accelerate turnover, and erode service quality (Grobelna, 2021; Salama et al., 2022). The accumulated evidence from North American and European hospitality settings documents a robust negative relationship between workplace stress and satisfaction, one that has led many researchers to treat it as a generalizable organizational phenomenon, transferable across national and cultural boundaries. That assumption, however, is increasingly challenged by cross-cultural scholarship. The cultural frameworks through which workers interpret workplace demands, the coping strategies they employ, and even the baseline expectations against which they evaluate satisfaction can differ substantially across societies (Hofstede, 2001; Pizam & Shani, 2009). Egyptian workplace hierarchies, gendered norms around service and professional conduct, and the social and religious structures that organize daily life may create stress-satisfaction dynamics that are meaningfully different from those documented in the West, not because stress is less real in Egyptian hotels, but because the conditions under which it translates into dissatisfaction may operate on different terms. Whether and how the stress-satisfaction relationship operates within Egypt's culturally and institutionally distinct hospitality environment is both a theoretically important question and a practically consequential one for a country staking significant national development ambitions on the quality of its tourism offer.

Women represent a particularly significant and underexamined segment of Egypt's hotel workforce, occupying roles spanning housekeeping and food service to front desk operations, event management, and senior leadership (Bourezg et al., 2025). Their position in Egypt's formal labor market is shaped by structural conditions that are without close parallel in Western research contexts: female labor force participation in Egypt remains among the lowest globally, at approximately 18%, and women who enter formal employment frequently navigate gendered expectations around professional conduct, constrained advancement, and the double burden of professional and domestic demands (Chihwai, 2026; Sharaf and Shahen, 2025). At the same time, women in Egypt have access to relational and cultural resources: strong family networks, faith-based frameworks of meaning and resilience, and deep community belonging, which may provide genuine psychological protection against occupational stress in ways that Western models of coping do not adequately capture (Bourezg et al., 2025; Hofstede, 2001). Their experience of occupational stress and its relationship to job satisfaction has, to the authors' knowledge, never been directly studied in the Egyptian context, a gap this study is designed to address.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Occupational Stress in the Hospitality Industry

Occupational stress is defined as the harmful physical and emotional response that occurs when job demands exceed an individual's capacity, resources, or needs (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health [NIOSH], 1999). Within hospitality research, stress has been linked to a broad constellation of antecedents, including role ambiguity, excessive

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workload, emotional labor demands, interpersonal conflict with guests and colleagues, and deficits in supervisory support and organizational resources (Grobelna, 2021; Jin et al., 2021). The hospitality industry's foundational reliance on service orientation creates structural conditions that are particularly fertile for occupational stress: workers are required to regulate their emotional expression, maintain attentive guest engagement, and sustain performance standards irrespective of their internal psychological state, often across long, irregular, and physically demanding shifts (Hochschild, 2012; Salama et al., 2022). Two theoretical frameworks have proven especially generative for understanding stress in hotel contexts. The demand-control model (Karasek, 1979; Vaughan, 2026), a seminal framework in occupational health research, predicts that stress is highest when task demands are elevated and decision latitude is constrained, a configuration that describes many front-of-house hospitality roles with particular accuracy. The effort-reward imbalance framework (Siegrist, 1996) adds a motivational dimension, highlighting the psychological costs of situations in which workers invest substantially without receiving commensurate recognition, compensation, or advancement. Both frameworks have received continued empirical support in contemporary hospitality research and continue to underpin the design of organizational stress interventions (Grobelna, 2021; Jin et al., 2021). What the literature has further established, and what is directly relevant to the present study, is that stress is not experienced uniformly across hotel role categories. Kitchen and culinary environments consistently rank among the most stressful in the sector: the combination of time pressure, heat, technical precision, physical intensity, and the unforgiving immediacy of performance consequences in food preparation creates a stress profile that is distinctive and severe (Jung et al., 2012, as cited in Salama et al., 2022). Customer-facing roles such as concierge and front desk operations carry a different but equally significant stress burden, rooted in the sustained emotional labor demands of managing diverse and unpredictable guest interactions while maintaining professional composure under observation (Hochschild, 2012; Jin et al., 2021). By contrast, back-of-house roles tend to afford greater task autonomy and reduced performance visibility, conditions consistently associated with lower reported stress across organizational contexts (Karasek, 1979; Grobelna, 2021). This role-based heterogeneity in stress exposure is a critical starting point for any organization seeking to develop effective, genuinely targeted support systems for its workforce.

Job Satisfaction: Theory and Antecedents in Hospitality Contexts

Job satisfaction, defined by Locke (1976) as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from one's appraisal of the job or job experiences, is among the most studied constructs in organizational psychology. Two broad theoretical traditions have shaped how researchers and practitioners understand its origins. Content theories, most notably Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs and Herzberg's (1959) two-factor model, identify the sources of satisfaction in the nature and characteristics of work itself. Herzberg's framework, now a foundational reference in hospitality scholarship, distinguishes between hygiene factors, such as pay, physical working conditions, and supervisory relationships, and motivators, such as achievement, recognition, and professional growth, with important implications for how hotels design roles and reward systems (Jin et al., 2021; Bourezg et al., 2025). Process theories offer a complementary lens, focusing on the cognitive and evaluative mechanisms through which workers arrive at satisfaction judgments by comparing their experience against personal expectations, equity norms, and social referents (Adams, 1965; Vroom, 1964). In hospitality settings, both traditions find contemporary empirical support. Supervision quality, perceived organizational support, and access to advancement emerge consistently as powerful predictors of hotel workers' satisfaction (Jin et al., 2021), while

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workers' assessments of whether their effort is fairly rewarded shape their affective orientation toward their roles in ways consistent with Adams's (1965) equity theory and Vroom's (1964) expectancy framework. The negative relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction is among the most robustly documented findings in organizational research. Evidence from hospitality samples indicates that elevated stress substantially reduces satisfaction through mechanisms including emotional exhaustion, role conflict, and perceived loss of control (Gobelna, 2021; Salama et al., 2022). Contemporary hospitality-specific research has confirmed this association across a wide range of national contexts (Jin et al., 2021; Salama et al., 2022), and systematic reviews identify it as among the most consistent relationships in the sector's occupational health literature (Krishnan et al., 2025). The breadth of this replication has led many researchers to treat the stress-satisfaction link as a generalizable organizational phenomenon. A growing body of cross-cultural scholarship, however, presents a substantive challenge to that assumption.

Cross-Cultural Variation in the Stress-Satisfaction Relationship

The argument that cultural context moderates the relationship between occupational stress and its psychological consequences is most fully developed in the work of Pizam and Shani (2009), who draw on Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions framework to propose that collectivism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term orientation each shape the degree to which occupational stressors translate into attitudinal and behavioral outcomes such as job dissatisfaction. In high power distance societies, hierarchical authority and its accompanying demands may be experienced as culturally normative rather than inherently stressful, attenuating the negative psychological impact that such relationships might carry in more egalitarian contexts (Hofstede, 2001). In collectivist societies, where individuals are embedded in dense networks of mutual obligation and support, the availability of family and community resources may buffer workers against the erosive psychological effects of workplace stress in ways that individualistic social arrangements simply cannot replicate (Hofstede, 2001; Pizam & Shani, 2009; Vaughan, 2026). Empirical support for these propositions comes from research conducted across the Middle East and North Africa region. Studies of women workers in Jordan have documented that supervisory relationships, internal advancement opportunities, and collegial support are primary pathways to job satisfaction, reflecting the relational and collectivist norms that shape work attitudes in this context (Chihwai, 2026; Bourezg et al., 2025). Workers in MENA settings also frequently draw upon strong family networks and religious coping frameworks, including patience, acceptance, and communal support, to navigate occupational adversity in ways that differ systematically from patterns observed in Western labor markets (Bourezg et al., 2025; Hofstede, 2001). Cultural scripts around collective duty and religious meaning-making appear to provide workers in these contexts with interpretive frameworks through which stressful experiences are recontextualized in ways that preserve a sense of purpose and satisfaction. Egypt occupies a theoretically significant position within this literature. As a predominantly collectivist, high power distance, majority Islamic society with deeply rooted cultural norms governing work, service, gender, and social conduct (Hofstede, 2001), it represents a context that differs fundamentally from the Western settings in which the dominant stress-satisfaction literature has been constructed. Despite these theoretically compelling grounds for expecting meaningful cultural variation, no published study has directly examined the stress-satisfaction relationship among hotel workers in Egypt, leaving a significant gap that the present study is designed to address.

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Women's Work in Middle Eastern Hospitality Contexts

Women's representation in Egypt's formal hospitality labor market has grown in recent decades, yet their occupational experiences remain poorly represented in the empirical literature. In Egypt, female labor force participation remains among the lowest globally, at approximately 18%, and women who do enter formal employment frequently encounter gendered challenges around role expectations, constrained advancement, and the double burden of professional and domestic demands (Chihwai, 2026; Sharaf and Shahan, 2025). Globally, research consistently shows that women in hospitality report stress profiles that differ from those of their male counterparts, shaped by the intersection of professional demands with gendered expectations about emotional availability and career ambition (Bourezg et al., 2025; Andrade et al., 2022). Notably, Andrade et al. (2022), drawing on cross-national data across 37 countries, found that women in the hospitality industry reported lower satisfaction than men across most occupational categories. In Middle Eastern hospitality contexts, these pressures are refracted through additional cultural dimensions. Expectations around modesty, cross-gender interaction, and the social meaning of service work create a workplace environment for women in Egyptian hotels that is not adequately captured by research conducted in Western or even other MENA settings (Hofstede, 2001). At the same time, the cultural resources available to women in this context, particularly the strength of family support networks and the psychological sustenance offered by religious faith and community belonging, may provide meaningful protection against occupational stress, in ways that may attenuate the stress-to-dissatisfaction pathway relative to Western norms (Bourezg et al., 2025; Chihwai, 2026). A further complexity is that women in Egyptian hotels occupy an exceptionally wide range of occupational roles. This occupational heterogeneity means that stress exposure is unlikely to be uniform across the female hotel workforce, and that any adequate account of women's occupational well-being must be sensitive to role-based variation (Jin et al., 2021). The present study addresses this directly.

Purpose of This Study

The present study has two interrelated aims. The first is to determine whether occupational stress significantly predicts job satisfaction among women hotel workers in Cairo, Egypt. The second is to assess whether stress levels vary meaningfully across occupational categories within the Egyptian hotel sector. Together, these aims address a significant and consequential empirical gap: despite the growing literature on occupational stress and satisfaction in hospitality settings across multiple regions (Grobelna, 2021; Jin et al., 2021; Salama et al., 2022), no published study has examined this relationship among hotel workers in Egypt. This gap matters not merely as an absence of data, but as a blind spot in theory: the cross-cultural variation hypothesis proposed by Pizam and Shani (2009) predicts that cultural context will modulate the strength of the stress-satisfaction relationship, yet this prediction has never been tested in Egypt, one of the MENA region's most culturally distinctive and economically significant hospitality markets. The study makes three distinct contributions to knowledge. First, it provides the first empirical test of the stress-satisfaction relationship in an Egyptian hotel context, establishing whether the directional pattern documented in Western literature holds in a culturally distant setting. Second, by benchmarking the observed effect size against Western norms, it generates evidence bearing directly on the proposition that cultural dimensions moderate the magnitude, not merely the direction, of this relationship, moving the cross-cultural variation debate from theoretical conjecture toward empirical ground. Third, by examining stress variation across ten occupational categories within a single national and cultural setting, it produces role-differentiated evidence that is both theoretically novel and directly actionable for HR

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practitioners designing well-being interventions in Egypt's expanding tourism sector. Collectively, these contributions advance understanding of how cultural context shapes occupational well-being in ways that current Western-dominated models cannot fully anticipate or explain.

METHOD

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design was employed to assess the relationship between occupational stress and job satisfaction and to evaluate between-group differences in stress levels across occupational categories. Cross-sectional designs are a well-established and appropriate methodology in occupational health and hospitality research, particularly for initial examinations of the prevalence and co-occurrence of key workplace phenomena within defined populations (Jin et al., 2021; Salama et al., 2022). While the design does not permit causal inference, it is well-matched to the hypothesis-testing objectives of the present study and provides a methodologically sound foundation upon which longitudinal and experimental work can build.

Participants and Sampling

The target population comprised women employed across hotel organizations within Cairo, Egypt. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, a strategy selected to ensure adequate representation of women employed across a range of occupational roles and organizational levels within Cairo's hotel sector. Initial recruitment yielded $N = 249$ participants. To ensure balanced representation across occupational categories for the primary regression analysis and to maintain analytical rigor, stratified random sampling was subsequently applied within each of the ten job type strata, producing an analytical subsample of $n = 150$ for the regression analysis. This subsample size was consistent with a priori power analysis targeting 80% statistical power at $\alpha = .05$ for the detection of medium effect sizes in simple linear regression (Cohen, 1992). The full recruited sample of $N = 249$ was retained for the one-way ANOVA examining stress differences across occupational categories, where the larger and more complete dataset was appropriate for between-group comparisons. Participants were employed across ten occupational categories: Front Desk and Reception, Housekeeping, Food and Beverage Service, Kitchen and Culinary, Concierge and Guest Services, Sales and Marketing, Event Planning and Coordination, Middle Management, Senior Management, and Other. The deliberate inclusion of this breadth of role categories was intended to ensure that the between-group stress comparisons conducted via ANOVA would reflect genuine occupational variation across Cairo's hotel workforce rather than artefacts of restricted sampling. A complete breakdown of the full recruited sample by occupational category is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Sample Characteristics by Occupational Category (N = 249)

Occupational Category	n	%
Front Desk/Reception	28	11.2
Housekeeping	27	10.8
Food and Beverage Service	26	10.4
Kitchen/Culinary	22	8.8
Concierge/Guest Services	21	8.4
Sales and Marketing	24	9.6
Event Planning/Coordination	25	10.0

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Occupational Category	n	%
Middle Management	28	11.2
Senior Management	20	8.0
Other	18	7.2
Total	249	100.0

Note. Percentages may not sum to exactly 100% due to rounding.

Measures

Survey instruments were prepared in both Arabic and English. A translation-back-translation procedure was applied to ensure conceptual equivalence across language versions, following established methodological best practice for cross-linguistic survey research (Brislin, 1970). All responses were collected anonymously through secured depositories, and written informed consent was obtained from every participant prior to data collection. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the International Executive School, Strasbourg, France. Occupational stress was measured using a single global item: “How would you rate your overall occupational stress at your current job?” on a five-point scale anchored at 1 (minimal stress) and 5 (severe stress). Job satisfaction was similarly assessed with a single global item: “How satisfied are you with your current job?” on a parallel five-point scale anchored at 1 (highly dissatisfied) and 5 (highly satisfied). Job type was recorded as a nominal variable corresponding to the ten occupational categories described above. The use of single-item global ratings, rather than validated multi-dimensional scales, was a deliberate methodological choice appropriate to the context and aims of the study. Single-item measures have been shown to demonstrate acceptable reliability and validity for global appraisal constructs, particularly in survey-based research conducted across language groups where item parsimony reduces respondent burden and the risk of translation artefact (Wanous et al., 1997, as discussed in Grobelna, 2021). This approach is, however, acknowledged as a limitation of the present study: single items cannot capture the faceted, multi-dimensional nature of either occupational stress or job satisfaction, and effect sizes obtained with such measures may underestimate true relationships due to attenuation from reduced measurement precision. Future research employing validated multi-item instruments will be essential for building on the directional evidence established here.

Data Analysis

All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS version 29.0. To address the first research question, a simple linear regression was conducted with occupational stress as the independent variable and job satisfaction as the dependent variable, enabling direct quantification of the direction, magnitude, and statistical significance of the predictive relationship. To address the second research question, a one-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine whether mean stress levels differed significantly across the ten job type categories. Effect size was indexed using partial eta-squared and interpreted according to the benchmarks established by Cohen (1988): small (partial eta-squared = .01), medium (partial eta-squared = .06), and large (partial eta-squared = .14).

RESULTS

Regression Analysis: Occupational Stress Predicting Job Satisfaction

The simple linear regression examining occupational stress as a predictor of job satisfaction yielded a statistically significant model: $F(1, 148) = 14.25, p < .001, R\text{-squared} = .10$. Occupational stress accounted for approximately 10% of variance in job satisfaction. The unstandardized regression coefficient was $B = -0.197$ ($SE = .052, 95\% \text{ CI } [-0.300, -0.094]$),

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indicating that each one-unit increase in occupational stress on the five-point scale was associated with a decrease of approximately 0.197 points in job satisfaction. The standardized coefficient was $\beta = -0.279$ ($t = -3.77$, $p < .001$), and the model constant was estimated at 5.00 ($SE = .176$, 95% CI [4.64, 5.34]). The negative direction of the association is consistent with theoretical expectations and the existing empirical literature (Grobelna, 2021; Salama et al., 2022). Full regression coefficient details are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Regression Coefficients: Occupational Stress Predicting Job Satisfaction (N = 249)

Variable	B	SE	95% CI	beta	t	p
Constant	5.00	.176	[4.64, 5.34]	--	28.42	< .001
Occupational Stress	-0.197	.052	[-0.300, -0.094]	-.279	-3.77	< .001

Note. β = standardized regression coefficient. CI = confidence interval.

ANOVA: Stress Differences Across Occupational Categories

The one-way ANOVA revealed a statistically significant overall effect of job type on occupational stress: $F(9, 139) = 3.10$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .17$. This moderate-to-large effect size indicates that occupational category alone accounts for approximately 17% of variance in stress levels, a finding that strongly underscores the practical importance of role-based differences in how stress is experienced and distributed across hotel organizations. Descriptive statistics for each occupational category are reported in Table 3. Kitchen and Culinary workers reported the highest mean stress in the sample ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.54$), followed by Concierge and Guest Services ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.41$) and Front Desk and Reception ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.60$). The lowest stress levels were observed among Housekeeping staff ($M = 2.20$, $SD = 1.60$) and Food and Beverage Service workers ($M = 2.23$, $SD = 1.30$). The 2.30-point spread between the highest and lowest mean stress scores on the five-point scale constitutes a substantively large divergence and has direct implications for how organizations should design, target, and resource stress management and well-being interventions.

Table 3 Mean Occupational Stress Levels by Job Role (N = 249)

Job Role	M	SD
Kitchen/Culinary	4.50	0.54
Concierge/Guest Services	4.00	1.41
Front Desk/Reception	3.52	1.60
Event Planning/Coordination	3.50	1.10
Middle Management	3.28	1.23
Senior Management	3.16	1.32
Sales and Marketing	3.14	0.37
Other	3.04	1.16
Food and Beverage Service	2.23	1.30
Housekeeping	2.20	1.60

DISCUSSION

This study contributes the first empirical examination of occupational stress and job satisfaction among women hotel workers in Cairo, and its findings carry implications that extend well beyond the Egyptian context. What is most theoretically significant here is not simply that stress predicts dissatisfaction (that directional finding was expected and consistent with a large body of prior work: Grobelna, 2021; Salama et al., 2022) but rather

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the magnitude of the relationship, which is substantially weaker than Western research would lead one to anticipate. This attenuation is the central interpretive challenge the data pose, and resolving it requires moving beyond the results themselves toward the cultural and structural conditions that shape how occupational pressure is experienced and absorbed by women in this particular setting.

The most theoretically consequential aspect of the stress-satisfaction finding is not its direction but its size. Contemporary hospitality research from Western contexts documents effect sizes substantially larger than those obtained here, with stress typically explaining 25 to 40 percent of variance in satisfaction outcomes through mechanisms including emotional exhaustion, role conflict, and erosion of perceived control (Grobelna, 2021; Krishnan et al., 2025). The gap between those benchmarks and the 10 percent observed here demands careful interpretation, and intellectual honesty requires that two explanations be considered before privileging either one. The first is measurement attenuation: single-item global ratings for both stress and satisfaction, while practical in cross-cultural survey contexts, compress the multi-dimensional structure of each construct into a single response, and this compression is known to suppress observed correlations relative to what multi-item validated scales would produce. On this reading, the modest R-squared reflects a limitation of the instrument rather than a genuine property of the Egyptian context, and a study using richer measurement might recover a larger effect. The second explanation is genuine cultural moderation: that the social architecture of Egyptian working life actively buffers the pathway between occupational pressure and satisfaction erosion in ways that reduce the true magnitude of the relationship, independent of how it is measured. These explanations are not mutually exclusive, and the present data cannot definitively adjudicate between them. However, the cultural moderation interpretation is the more theoretically coherent reading for several reasons. First, the attenuation from single-item measurement, while real, is unlikely to account for a gap of the magnitude observed here; even studies using brief measures in Western contexts consistently report effect sizes well above 10 percent. Second, the theoretical conditions for cultural moderation are not merely plausible in the Egyptian context; they are well-documented. Pizam and Shani's (2009) framework, grounded in Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimensions, predicts precisely this pattern for high power distance, collectivist societies: hierarchical demands are more likely to be understood as legitimate and culturally sanctioned rather than as an imposition, tempering the psychological cost that such demands would carry in more egalitarian settings, while the dense web of family, community, and faith-based relationships available to workers serves as a genuine buffer: not merely a coping strategy but a structural counterweight to occupational pressure that absorbs stress before it reaches the level of conscious satisfaction evaluation (Bourezg et al., 2025; Hofstede, 2001). Third, this interpretation is consistent with the emerging empirical literature on women's workplace satisfaction in the MENA region, where relational and religious resources have been documented as meaningful moderators of occupational adversity (Bourezg et al., 2025; Chihwai, 2026). For women in Egypt specifically, these resources appear to function as a form of psychological capital that partially decouples their sense of work-life meaning from the pressures of any single shift or role. The most intellectually defensible position is therefore that the attenuated effect size in this study reflects a combination of both factors, with cultural moderation as the primary driver and measurement precision as a secondary contributor. Future research employing validated multi-item instruments will be essential to establish the relative weight of each. What the present finding establishes clearly, regardless of which explanation carries more weight, is that the stress-satisfaction relationship in Egypt does not operate on the same

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terms as in Western contexts, and that practitioners who import Western diagnostic thresholds and intervention benchmarks without cultural recalibration will systematically misread the Egyptian workforce (Pizam & Shani, 2009).

The finding that occupational category accounts for nearly a fifth of all variance in stress levels has a meaning that goes beyond statistical significance: it establishes that where a woman is positioned within a hotel's organizational structure is a primary determinant of her occupational well-being, arguably as consequential as any personal characteristic or individual coping style (Jin et al., 2021). This is an organizational finding as much as an individual-level one, and its implications for management philosophy are substantial. The stress burden is not randomly distributed across the workforce; it is concentrated in particular roles in predictable ways that theory explains and evidence now confirms in an Egyptian context. The demand-control model (Karasek, 1979) accounts well for this patterning: roles combining high task demands with constrained autonomy generate the most pressure, while roles permitting greater self-direction and predictability generate less. The addition of sustained emotional labor, the requirement to perform warmth, patience, and attentiveness regardless of one's internal state, creates a further layer of burden that is acutely felt in guest-facing positions and largely absent in task-oriented back-of-house roles (Hochschild, 2012). What the present study adds is evidence that this structural logic operates within the specific institutional and cultural conditions of Egypt's hotel sector, where brigade hierarchies in kitchens, high-interaction guest service norms in concierge and front desk environments, and the gendered expectations surrounding women's performance of service all intersect to create stress profiles that differ sharply across roles. Importantly, the fact that managerial positions sit at an intermediate stress level, elevated relative to back-of-house workers but below the front-of-house peak, suggests that formal authority does not uniformly protect against occupational pressure in this context. The dual accountability of Egyptian hotel managers, responsible both for organizational outcomes and for the relational demands of leading diverse frontline teams, appears to carry its own distinctive burden, one that Siegrist's (1996) effort-reward imbalance framework would frame in terms of the misalignment between responsibility and recognition that is a pervasive feature of middle management in service environments (Ali & Agha, 2025).

Taken together, the two main findings of this study converge on a single organizational imperative: the design of well-being strategies for Egypt's hotel workforce cannot be either uniform across roles or borrowed wholesale from Western models. The role-based stress heterogeneity makes differentiation necessary; the cultural moderation of the stress-satisfaction relationship makes cultural grounding essential. For high-stress roles in kitchens and guest-facing environments, the priority is structural: reducing demand-control imbalances through schedule redesign, autonomy-preserving work organization, and sustained investment in supervisory quality, since Grobelna (2021) has shown that supervisor support is among the most powerful levers available to organizations for managing emotional exhaustion in exactly these settings. Emotional labor regulation training and recovery protocols have particular relevance for concierge and front desk workers, where the performance of sustained attentiveness under unpredictable guest interaction is the defining occupational demand (Hochschild, 2012; Jin et al., 2021). For roles where stress is comparatively lower, the managerial challenge is different: maintaining the task autonomy and predictability that appear to protect these workers, rather than inadvertently eroding these conditions through operational changes that increase performance visibility or reduce self-direction. Across all roles, the evidence that cultural factors meaningfully buffer the

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stress-to-dissatisfaction pathway points toward an underexploited resource. The collectivist values, relational density, and faith-based meaning frameworks that characterize Egyptian working life are not impediments to organizational effectiveness; they are assets that well-designed HR practice can engage. Recognition systems rooted in collective rather than individual achievement, team-based support structures, and leadership development that cultivates relational attunement rather than transactional oversight are all consistent with the cultural context and likely to produce more durable well-being outcomes than imported frameworks designed for more individualistic labor markets (Pizam & Shani, 2009; Bourezg et al., 2025). The significance of this cannot be overstated given Egypt's ambitious tourism trajectory. As the country works toward its 2030 visitor targets (Egyptian Tourism Authority, 2023) and the Grand Egyptian Museum redefines Cairo's global cultural profile (Ali et al., 2020), the sustained quality of the hotel experience these women deliver will be inseparable from the quality of the organizational conditions in which they work. Satisfying women hotel workers is not incidental to Egypt's tourism ambitions; it is a condition of their fulfillment. Research by Andrade et al. (2022), drawing on cross-national data, has established that women in hospitality report lower satisfaction than men across most occupational categories globally, a gap that is likely to be compounded in Egypt by the structural challenges of low female labor force participation, constrained advancement, and the double burden of professional and domestic demands that Sharaf and Shahen (2025) identify as characteristic of Egyptian women's working lives. The present study does not resolve these structural inequities, but it names the terrain on which they play out in Cairo's hotels, and provides the role-specific and culturally grounded evidence base that any serious organizational response will need to engage.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The present study has several limitations that should be acknowledged both to bound its conclusions appropriately and to map a productive agenda for future research. The most significant methodological constraint is the use of single-item global ratings for both occupational stress and job satisfaction. While single-item measures offer practical advantages in cross-cultural survey research, as they reduce respondent burden and minimise the risk of translation artefact, they cannot capture the multi-dimensional structure of either construct. Occupational stress, as operationalised in validated instruments such as the Perceived Stress Scale or the Job Stress Index, encompasses role ambiguity, workload, interpersonal conflict, and resource adequacy as distinct facets; job satisfaction similarly spans intrinsic rewards, supervisory relationships, pay equity, and growth opportunity. A single global item collapses these distinctions, and the attenuation of effect sizes from reduced measurement precision means that the observed R-squared of .10 may underestimate the true magnitude of the stress-satisfaction association. This is a critical interpretive caveat: the gap between this study's effect size and Western benchmarks may reflect genuine cultural moderation, measurement attenuation, or some combination of both. Future research employing validated multi-item scales is essential to disentangle these explanations and to establish whether the cultural buffering interpretation holds when measurement precision is improved. The cross-sectional design, while appropriate for the study's initial hypothesis-testing aims, does not permit causal inference. Although the findings are consistent with a stress-to-dissatisfaction causal pathway, the reverse possibility that pre-existing dissatisfaction amplifies the subjective perception of stress cannot be ruled out on the basis of cross-sectional data alone. Longitudinal research tracking the same workers across time is needed to establish temporal precedence and ground causal claims on a stronger evidentiary foundation. The sample's geographic restriction to Cairo limits the

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generalizability of findings to Egypt's broader hospitality landscape. Resort and leisure destinations such as Sharm El-Sheikh, Hurghada, and Luxor operate under markedly different conditions of tourism intensity, seasonality, and guest composition, and may produce stress-satisfaction dynamics that diverge from those observed here; future research should extend sampling across these regions to build a more comprehensive and nationally representative evidence base. The study's exclusive focus on women workers, while substantively motivated by the identified gap in gender-specific research in Egyptian hospitality contexts, means that the findings cannot be contextualized against a male comparator group. Incorporating both men and women in future research, and explicitly modelling gender as a moderating variable, would substantially deepen understanding of how stress and satisfaction operate across Egypt's hotel workforce (Andrade et al., 2022; Sharaf and Shahen, 2025). Finally, the study does not test for mediation or moderation of the stress-satisfaction relationship by job type. Given the large between-role variation in stress documented here, it is theoretically plausible that occupational category moderates the stress-satisfaction association, such that the relationship is stronger in some roles than others. Moderated regression analyses in future research would clarify this possibility and further sharpen the evidence base for role-specific intervention design.

CONCLUSION

This study offers three contributions to the occupational health and hospitality literatures. First, it establishes that occupational stress negatively predicts job satisfaction among women hotel workers in Egypt, confirming that the directional pattern documented in Western research holds in this culturally distinct setting. Second, the attenuated strength of this relationship relative to Western benchmarks raises important questions about cultural transferability, suggesting that factors specific to the Egyptian context may shape how workplace pressure is experienced and processed, though this warrants direct investigation in future research. Third, the finding that stress levels vary substantially across occupational roles underscores that well-being in hotel organizations is not simply an individual matter but a structural one, shaped by the conditions under which particular roles are performed. Together, these findings caution against the uncritical application of Western occupational stress frameworks in non-Western settings, and point toward role-specific, culturally informed approaches as a more appropriate foundation for workforce well-being strategy in Egypt's expanding hotel sector. As Egypt's tourism ambitions grow, so too does the importance of understanding and improving the working lives of the women who sit at the heart of its hospitality industry.

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Conflict of Interest

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