

## **Coping Strategies' Effect on Occupational Stress and its Reflection on Employees' Turnover Intention in Hotels: The Moderating Role of Social Exchange**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the effect of three occupational stress' coping strategies, namely problem-solving, avoidance, and seeking social support on employees' turnover intentions in hotels, taking into consideration the moderating role of social exchange. A questionnaire was used to obtain information from the staff of five-star hotel chains in Sharm El-Sheik region of Egypt. A variety of sampling methods were used. 398 valid responses were gathered and analyzed using PLS-SEM. Contrary to the hypothesized model of the study, the results showed a positive relationship between problem-solving coping strategies with occupational stress. Results also showed a positive relationship between avoidance as a coping strategy and occupational stress and a negative relationship between seeking social support as a coping strategy and occupational stress. A positive relationship was also reported between occupational stress and employees' turnover intentions. In addition, the results indicated that social exchange plays a moderating role and mitigates the relationship between occupational stress and employees' turnover intentions. The research provides a theoretical contribution and helps to broaden the knowledge base regarding stress-coping strategies, social exchange, and turnover intentions in the hotel context. Practically, the research provides hotel human resources management with recommendations to properly deal with occupational stress and employee turnover, besides maximizing the benefits of social exchange.

**Keywords:** Coping strategies, occupational stress, employees' turnover intention, social exchange, five-star hotels.

### **Introduction**

Stress has emerged as a key area of study in behavioral science (Gellis & Kim, 2004). Stress at work is a prevalent aspect of modern life (Arshadi & Damiri, 2013). In the workplace, it is commonly referred to as "occupational stress" and is a global problem (Hasan & Tumah, 2019). Work stress is the result of work expectations that are greater than the worker's capacity for coping (Ahmad *et al.*, 2021). Occupational stress has long been a crucial area of study for the hotel sector (O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Hwang *et al.*, 2014; Kahar & Wee, 2020). The hospitality sector is more stressful than most other sectors for its personnel (Shi *et al.*, 2022). Poor working conditions, long hours, low pay, work overload, frequent rotations, working unsocial hours, and a variety of shifts are characteristics of jobs in the hospitality business (Min *et al.*, 2015; Kahar & Wee, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2020; Ma *et al.*, 2021; Ahmad *et al.*, 2021).

Since the first investigations, coping has been researched along with occupational stress. According to Gbadamosi & Ross (2012) and Elziny & Kamel, (2020), coping strategies are methods individuals decide to react to difficult circumstances and lessen stress. Therefore, hospitality workers need to have adaptable coping strategies to maintain their psychological well-being and productivity at work (Kim & Agrusa, 2011). According to several studies (e.g., Aveyet *et al.*, 2009; O' Neill & Davis, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2021), excessive stress has been linked to

occupational health issues, turnover intentions, and a lack of job satisfaction for hotel personnel. Employee turnover intention has been identified as a significant concern for firms in the hospitality industry globally (Blomme *et al.*, 2010; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017). Employees may leave their jobs if they encounter significant levels of work-related stress and lack the resources to cope with it (Jolly *et al.*, 2022).

The hospitality sector is characterized as a heavy labor industry, and daily there are numerous exchanges between leaders (supervisors) and employees, as well as between coworkers (Ma & Qu, 2011). Social contact between staff members and organizations is referred to as “social exchange” (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Osman *et al.*, 2016). It has frequently been used to describe the relationships between members of an organization, which are supervisors and coworkers. Due to their value in predicting employees' attitudes and performance on the job, social exchange relationships have drawn a lot of attention from organizational researchers (Travis & Mor Barak, 2010; Kim & MorBarak, 2015).

Frontline hospitality industry personnel may manage stress, maintain their job happiness, engage in their occupations, and have less turnover intention when they receive high levels of social support from their supervisors and coworkers (Yousaf *et al.*, 2020). They can support employees in developing adaptive coping skills, which can result in a more productive and stress-free work environment (Ma *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, Park *et al.* (2020) found that social support can assist employees in dealing with everyday job stress and lessen their turnover intentions.

For the importance of work stress, coping strategies, and turnover intention among employees in the hospitality industry, several studies have researched these issues and have revealed the relationship between coping strategies and occupational stress (Huang *et al.*, 2018; Choi *et al.*, 2019; Chua *et al.*, 2022) and the relationship between work stress and turnover intention (Jung & Yoon, 2014; Choi *et al.*, 2019; Park *et al.*, 2020; Park & Min, 2020). Despite the importance of social exchange within the work especially in the hospitality industry and how can reduce employee turnover intentions, little research investigates how can social exchange moderate the relationship between occupational stress and employee turnover intentions (Yousaf *et al.*, 2020). The current study contributes to showing the effect of occupational stress on employees' turnover intentions when moderated by the social exchange. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate the effect of three occupational stress' coping strategies, namely problem-solving, avoidance, and seeking social support on employees' turnover intentions in hotels, taking into consideration the moderating role of social exchange. To attain such a purpose, the study attempted to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the impact of problem-solving, avoidance, and seeking social support as coping strategies for occupational stress.
2. To investigate the impact of occupational stress on hotel employees' turnover intentions.
3. To analyze the moderating role of social exchange on the relationship between occupational stress on hotel employees' turnover intentions.

## **2. Literature review and hypotheses development**

### **Occupational stress**

Occupational stress is a person's self-perceived negative influence on a person. It is the relationship between an employee's demands from their environment and their ability to respond to those demands (Zhu *et al.*, 2020). According to Jamal (2005) and Sampson and Akyeampong (2017), “occupational stress” is a type of physical and emotional excitement that an employee

experiences when he is exposed to a potentially dangerous circumstance or a confrontation with a coworker or client. It is the perception of a mismatch between an individual's ability to meet environmental requirements and those requirements themselves (Elziny & Kamel, 2020). Job stress is the term used to describe the physiological and psychological responses to stressors that are greater than a person's immediate capacity for coping (Chiang *et al.*, 2010; Park *et al.*, 2020). Stress is a result of how a person perceives demands concerning available resources (Chua *et al.*, 2022). Stress is only felt when circumstances are judged to be beyond one's capabilities, according to Lazarus & Folkman (1984) and (Kizanlikli & Şener, 2012). People who experience resource loss are more likely to become stressed and turn toward resource loss avoidance (Chua *et al.*, 2022). Certain occupations in the workplace are more stressful than others, and each person responds to the situation differently (Anbazhagan *et al.*, 2013; Hasan & Tumah, 2019). Workplace stressors differ depending on the type of job and occupation (Kizanlikli & Şener, 2012). Even though some stressors may be universal to all jobs, the stressors may differ depending on the degree or type of employment (Ahmad *et al.*, 2021).

Isfianadewi & Noordyani (2020) stated that employees are more likely to feel stress when there is a bad organizational structure, a lack of social support from superiors and coworkers, work overload, role conflict, the difficulty of the job, distance from the workplace, rapid change, and not enough pay.

Because employees frequently face competing demands from the company, their supervisors, and their customers, work stress can be a particular issue in customer-oriented sectors (O'Neill & Davis, 2011). Occupational stress has long been a crucial area of study for the hotel sector (O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Hwang *et al.*, 2014; Kahar & Wee, 2020). Because it is by definition a customer-focused company, the hospitality sector is more stressful than most other sectors for its personnel (Shi *et al.*, 2022). Poor working conditions, long hours, low pay, work overload, frequent rotations, working unsocial hours, and a variety of shifts, such as weekend, night, or holiday shifts, are characteristics of occupations in the hospitality business (Min *et al.*, 2015; Kahar & Wee, 2020; Park *et al.*, 2020; Ma *et al.*, 2021; Ahmad *et al.*, 2021). The most significant drivers of stress in the hotel sector have been noted in previous studies, including job insecurity, inadequate pay, feeling badly managed with few resources, work-life balance, and interacting with clients (Yousaf *et al.*, 2020; Ahmad *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, hotels prioritize guests' emotions over staff members' feelings, forcing staff members to reveal their emotions when interacting with guests (Jain & Jain, 2005; Jung & Yoon, 2015). Belotti (2017) said that hotel front-line staff experience job-related stress more frequently than any other hotel personnel because they interact frequently with guests.

### **Coping strategies and Occupational Stress**

Managing a disturbed person and dealing with specific internal and external demands that are deemed to be taxing or surpassing the resources of the person-environment interaction are referred to as coping, and it is a core strategy for managing stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Folkman *et al.*, 1986; Zhu *et al.*, 2020; El-Manstrly *et al.*, 2021). Since the first investigations, coping has been researched along with occupational stress. A coping strategy is a plan that people or groups have developed to deal with a social, emotional, or other circumstance that would be unacceptable otherwise (Huang *et al.*, 2018). Coping strategies, also known as "coping styles," are the precise psychological or behavioral attempts used to lessen the stress and strain brought on by the stressors (Smith *et al.*, 2016; Choi *et al.*, 2019). Coping mechanisms aim to lessen the negative effects of stress on health (Chua *et al.*, 2022). According to personal or

environmental conditions, the effectiveness of a coping method may be positive or negative (Sommerfield & McCrae, 2000). The ability to deal with stressful situations depends on an individual's thinking style or personality features (Kahar & Wee, 2020). People will choose one coping method over another based on how well they feel they can manage their stressors and how much access they have to coping resources (Trianasari & Rahmawati, 2020). Resources that a person might use to deal with emotional stress are referred to as "coping resources". Important resources in the workplace context include social support from coworkers and bosses (Narayan, 2017). Studies have demonstrated that service-oriented workers use suitable coping strategies to preserve their resources (such as their well-being and self-esteem) and reduce stress in light of the circumstances (Choi *et al.*, 2019; Chua *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, hospitality workers need to have adaptable coping strategies to maintain their psychological well-being and productivity at work (Kim & Agrusa, 2011).

To deal with stressful situations, some common strategies can be used, such as problem-focused coping, avoidance, and seeking social support (Amirkhan, 1990; Elziny & Kamel, 2020). The first coping strategy is problem-focused, which refers to individuals handling or resolving directly any problems in their surrounding environment (Zhu *et al.*, 2020). The problem-focused coping techniques aggressively reduce or get rid of the source(s) of stress (Huang *et al.*, 2018). The purpose of problem-focused coping, also known as active coping, is to deal with the issue at hand and its consequences to eliminate or avoid the cause of stress (Kizanlikli & Şener, 2012). Furthermore, problem-focused task coping involves employees taking proactive steps to alter a stressful circumstance by making decisions or taking specific direct actions to remedy the problem (Jung & Yoon, 2015). A hotel employee who uses this coping mechanism may strive to continuously advance his or her abilities in carrying out regular job duties through self-study and on-the-job training (Huang *et al.*, 2018). When both felt control over the stressful circumstance and believed coping resources are high, problem-focused or task-oriented coping became more important (Chua *et al.*, 2022). Numerous studies have stressed the value of problem-solving to reduce workplace stress among employees in institutions (Wallace *et al.*, 2010; Lai & Chen, 2012). Ayres and Malouff (2007) discovered that there was a link between problem-solving and stress reduction in their study of flight attendants. From the previous discussion, the following hypothesis was formulated:

*H1: There is a negative relationship between problem-focused coping strategies and occupational stress.*

The second coping strategy is avoidance, which is defined as making mental and behavioral efforts to reduce, deny, or ignore a difficult situation (Holahan *et al.*, 2005). Avoiding people or circumstances that will make workers feel stressed is one way to do it (Anbazhagan *et al.*, 2013). Avoidance is a method of managing stressful situations through cognitive and emotional responses without changing the events themselves. Avoidance is a maladaptive or passive style of coping in which people try to physically isolate themselves from stressful events (Duhacheck, 2005). Avoidance coping occurs when people try to divert their attention away from a problem by occupying themselves with other activities. However, in instances of intense stress, adopting this coping strategy can be challenging (El Manstrly *et al.*, 2021).

In contrast to active problem-solving and support-seeking strategies, the avoidance coping approach seems to have the opposite effect on stress levels. While problem-focused and seeking social support are coping strategies that can lower stress, avoidance coping mechanisms can increase stress (Duschek *et al.*, 2020). Positive and desirable outcomes are achieved at work and

in other areas of everyday life when active problem-focused coping is utilized more and avoidance coping is used less (Kim & Agrusa, 2011). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H2: There is a positive relationship between avoidance coping strategy and occupational stress.*

The third coping strategy is seeking social support which is defined as a person's perceptions of love, care, and respect from others around him (Sarafino & Smith, 2014; Yousaf *et al.*, 2020). Social support can come from a variety of people, including family, friends, coworkers, and superiors (Shakespeare-finch & Obst, 2011; Armstrong *et al.*, 2015; Isfianadewi & Noordyani, 2020). But at the workplace, coworkers and supervisors are seen as the sources of social support an employee can turn to for consideration, respect, and assistance in achieving his or her goals and objectives there (Yousaf *et al.*, 2020). A large body of research appears to support the idea that seeking social support lessens individual stress. These studies provided strong support for the notion that social support has a significant impact on stress and reduces it in the workplace (e.g., Anbazhagan *et al.*, 2013; Glozah & Pevalin, 2014; Mossakowski & Zhang, 2014; Reid & Taylor, 2015). Numerous stress-related effects are associated with a lack of social support (Narayan, 2017). Social support may influence the stress response by lowering the perception or experience of work stressors, which in turn indirectly lowers the risk of undesirable outcomes like psychological illness (Kahar & Wee, 2020). A worker with strong social and familial support may be able to handle the psychological pressures associated with their job. Workers in the hospitality industry who receive strong social support are less susceptible to the harmful consequences of work stress (Yousaf *et al.*, 2020). From the previous discussion, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*H3: There is a negative relationship between seeking social support coping strategy and occupational stress.*

### **Turnover Intention**

The turnover intention has long been a significant management concern (Chen *et al.*, 2010; Arshadi & Damiri, 2013), and it continues to be a significant issue for businesses. Employee turnover intention has been identified as a significant concern for firms in the hospitality industry globally (Blomme *et al.*, 2010; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017). While small and medium-sized enterprises frequently experience turnover, larger hotels are more likely to view this as a problem (Akgunduz & Gürel, 2019). The likelihood that a worker will leave his or her existing position within a specific period is known as turnover intention (Fong & Mahfar, 2013). It is the preceding warning stage before the resignation takes effect (Jung & Yoon, 2015; Ahmad *et al.*, 2021; Jabutay & Rungruang, 2021).

### **Occupational Stress and Turnover Intention**

According to several studies (Avey *et al.*, 2009; O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2021), excessive stress has been linked to occupational health issues, turnover intentions, and a lack of job satisfaction for hotel personnel. Stress can make employees unhappy at work and eventually force them to quit. This not only affects the personnel but also the organization as a whole (Demirdağ *et al.*, 2020). Employees may leave their jobs if they encounter significant levels of work-related stress and lack the resources to cope with it (Jolly *et al.*, 2022). Employees with

higher levels of stress according to Elangovan (2001), have lower levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which increases the likelihood that they would leave their organization. The experience of job-related stress has also been highlighted by Firth *et al.* (2004) as one of the key components associated with turnover intention, indicating that higher turnover intention is likely to result from increasing job stress. Therefore, it would be logical to anticipate that workers in the hospitality industry under high levels of stress would act less positively, gradually increasing their intention to leave their jobs every day (Karatepe & Karatepe, 2009; Choi *et al.*, 2019; Park *et al.*, 2020; Park & Min, 2020). Job stress is strongly correlated with turnover intention, according to research by Jung and Yoon (2014) conducted with restaurant employees. Similarly, Huang *et al.* (2018) discovered that workplace stress significantly affects the intention of Chinese hotel employees to leave their jobs. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is formulated:

*H4: There is a positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention*

### **Social Exchange**

According to the social exchange theory (SET), all social interactions take place within an exchange framework (Tsenet *al.*, 2021). The main goal of this exchange is to increase advantages and reduce costs (Jabutay & Rungruang, 2021). The social exchange has been defined as voluntary activities motivated by the benefits one expects from another. When people interact socially, they expect to get something in return, just like when they do business (Ma & Qu, 2011). Social contact between staff members and organizations is referred to as social exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Osman *et al.*, 2016). Understanding workplace behavior and the interactions between employers and employees is related to this notion (Biron & Boon, 2013). It is the foundation for describing employee behaviors (Ghosh & Sahney, 2011). Due to their value in predicting employees' attitudes and performance on the job, social exchange relationships have drawn a lot of attention from organizational researchers (Travis & Mor Barak, 2010; Kim & MorBarak, 2015).

The hospitality sector is characterized as a heavy labor industry, and daily there are numerous exchanges between leaders (supervisors) and employees as well as between coworkers. Front-line staff may interact socially with three different groups of individuals in the hotel setting: leaders or supervisors, coworkers, and guests. They are known as 1) the leader-member exchange (LMEX), 2) the coworkers' exchange, and 3) the customer-employee exchange, respectively (Ma & Qu, 2011). Compared to other types of social interaction, research on supervisor social exchange has garnered more attention. Also, the hotel sector values coworker and customer-employee exchanges for two reasons. First, hotel staff members do not perform independent jobs. Instead, the development of high-quality service heavily depends on the cooperation of hotel staff. As a result, there are lots of interactions among coworkers when providing customer services. Second, providing excellent customer service is thought to be the most crucial duty of hotel staff. Customers participate actively in the service; they are not just passive recipients of it (Sierra & McQuitty, 2005; Ma & Qu, 2011).

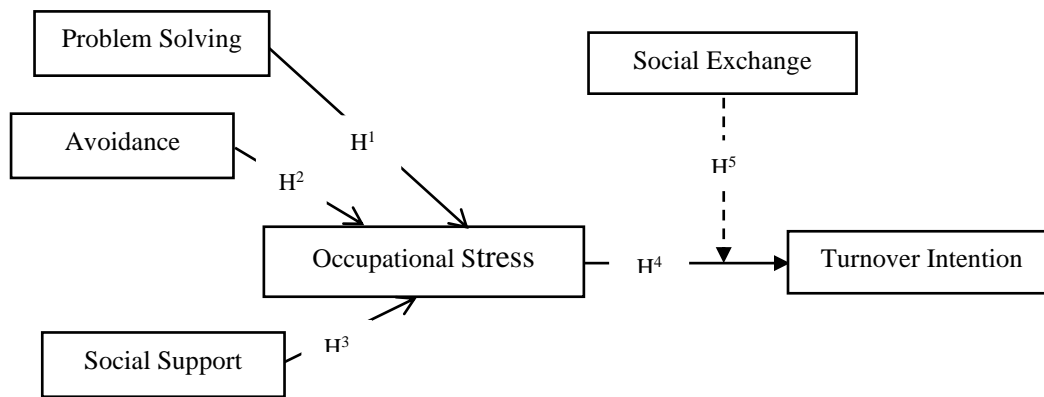
The term "coworker social exchange" describes the assistance that coworkers provide to each other to complete tasks (Beehr *et al.*, 2000; Shi *et al.*, 2022). Supervisor social exchange clarified the employee's impressions of how much their supervisors regard their efforts and are concerned about their well-being (Knies & Leisink, 2014; Isfianadewi & Noordyani, 2022).

According to Sloan (2012) and Zebet *al.* (2022), one of the key strategies for reducing workplace stress and enhancing the working environment is a supervisor's support for their staff.

Furthermore, when a worker perceives a balanced relationship with a superior, he is more likely to repay favors by lowering his desire to leave the organization (Kim *et al.*, 2015). Leader-member connections affect how committed subordinates are and make them less likely to leave (Kim *et al.*, 2017; Al Hashimi *et al.*, 2019; Jabutay & Rungruang, 2021). Park *et al.* (2020) found that social support can assist employees in dealing with everyday job stress and lessen their turnover intention. Lack of social support inside a workplace may increase employees' desire to leave (Price, 2001; Akgunduz & Gürel, 2019). It has been shown that a high turnover rate becomes a serious issue when social exchange fails (Avanzi *et al.*, 2014; Schulz *et al.*, 2014; Osman *et al.*, 2016). The two social support indicators from coworkers and direct supervisors are also significantly and favorably associated with job satisfaction and negatively related to turnover intention in the nursing profession (Heijden *et al.*, 2010). From this discussion, the following hypothesis can be proposed:

*H5: Social exchange in the workplace moderates the relationship between occupational stress and employees' turnover intentions.*

The conceptual framework and hypotheses of the study are presented in Figure (1) below.



**Figure (1):** Conceptual framework and hypotheses of the study

## **Methodology**

### **Measures**

To measure occupational stress, a 7-item scale adapted from Huang *et al.* (2018) was used. For the social exchange, a 14-items scale adapted from Ma and Qu (2011) was adopted. The turnover intention was measured by a 3-item scale by Babakus *et al.* (2008). In addition, the three coping strategies namely, problem-solving, avoidance, and seeking social support were assessed by a 12-item scale adapted from Edwards & Baglioni (1993) and Lazarus (1993); 5 items for problem-solving coping strategy, 3-items for the avoidance coping strategy, and 4 items for the seeking support coping strategy.

### **Sampling and data collection**

This study relied on survey methodology; a questionnaire was used to collect data from the employees working in five-star hotel chains in Sharm El-Sheikh region in Egypt. Sharm El-Sheikh, according to Shehata and Selem (2021), has been voted as the most touristic city with luxury hotel chains in Egypt. Besides, five-star hotel chains have a higher workload than other

hotel categories to provide hotel services internationally; that's why were chosen to be investigated.

Two sections make up the questionnaire. The respondents' demographic profile was addressed in the first section, and the items from the examined latent variables were presented in the second. The survey was performed in Arabic, and factors were evaluated using validated scales based on prior research. The back-translation method was used to guarantee translation quality. Two separate multilingual specialists were tasked with translating an English version into Arabic and then back to English. A Likert scale with a range of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to evaluate each question.

Both online surveys and self-administrated surveys were adapted to distribute the questionnaire. Due to the hard in accessing the population and gaining more responses, a variety of sampling methods were relied on. Three types of sampling methods were adopted; in the beginning, a self-selection sample was first made by distributing the questionnaire on-site and spreading the link online via the LinkedIn website, a convenient sampling method was then used to send the link to surveyors via their LinkedIn profiles, and finally, a snowball sample was utilized by requesting certain employees to share the link with their peers who work in hotels. 398 valid responses “277 online and 121 self-administrated” were gathered and included in the study's final analysis. The distribution of all surveys took place from January to April 2022.

In terms of the sample's characteristics (Table 1), 317 of the 398 respondents (or slightly over 79.6%) were men. Around 48.5% (n = 193) were between 28 and 38 years old, and 80.4% (n=320) held a bachelor's degree. 39.5% of respondents (n = 157) reported having worked at their hotels for more than ten years. The Food and Beverage department makes up nearly half of the participants (51.5%) (n = 205), while the front-of-the-line department makes up approximately a third (30.7%) (n = 154) of the participants.

**Table (1): Participant’s characteristics (N=398)**

		Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>	Male	317	79.6
	Female	81	20.4
<b>Age</b>	18 to <28	154	38.7
	28 to < 38	193	48.5
	38 to < 48	41	10.3
	> 48	10	2.5
<b>Education</b>	High School/Institute	64	16.1
	Bachelor	320	80.4
	Master/ PhD	14	3.5
<b>Experience</b>	<2 years	75	18.8
	2 to 5 years	79	19.8
	5 to 10 years	87	21.9
	>10 years	157	39.5
<b>Department</b>	Front Office	154	38.7
	Food and Beverage	205	51.5
	Housekeeping	26	6.5
	Sales and Marketing	13	3.3



## Analysis and results

### The measurement model

Reliability and validity analysis were conducted for all constructs and related indicators to evaluate the measurement model (see Table 2). The item loadings are greater than 0.6, indicating that strong correlations with latent variables have been established (Manley *et al.*, 2020). Table (2) also illustrated the mean scores of occupational stress, turnover intention, and social exchange as reported by hotel employees (3.23±.764), (3.24±1.03), and (3.63±.69), respectively. In addition, the mean scores for stress coping strategies were (4.15±.79), (3.13±.93), and (3.52±.83) for problem-solving, avoidance, and seeking support, respectively.

**Table (2): Descriptive Statistics and Confirmatory Factor Analysis**

<b>Construct /Items</b>	<b>Mean*</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Item Loading</b>
<b>Problem Solving</b>	4.15	.79	
I suggest ways to fix the issue.	4.19	.87	0.90
I attempt to thoroughly prepare a path of action rather than acting impulsively.	4.23	.76	0.88
I consider every alternative before making a choice.	4.10	1.04	0.90
I set some objectives for myself to handle the situation.	4.16	.93	0.81
Until I come to a solution that works, I try several approaches to the problem.	4.10	.94	0.88
<b>Avoidance</b>	3.13	.93	
I wished that the situation would end or disappear in some way.	3.70	1.031	0.92
I prayed for a miracle to occur.	3.30	1.203	0.91
In general, I try to stay away from people.	2.41	1.248	0.72
<b>Seeking Social Support</b>	3.52	.83	
I ask people who are closest to me for reassurance.	3.26	1.06	0.71
I share my concerns with others since doing so helps me feel better.	3.45	1.23	0.76
I accept support and understanding from friends who are experiencing the same issue.	3.84	1.12	0.94
I seek out a friend's opinion on how to improve the situation.	3.58	.96	0.73
<b>Occupational Stress</b>	3.23	.764	
The hotel has a high rate of burnout among employees at my level.	3.32	1.13	0.75
I am more stressed out than I should be by my job.	3.45	1.15	0.73
Work takes up a lot of my time.	3.61	1.30	0.73
I frequently become frustrated by my job.	2.61	1.14	0.75
Time for other activities is limited by working at a hotel.	3.65	1.35	0.81
Occasionally, I have tightness in my chest when I think of my job.	2.48	1.18	0.71
My work stresses me out more than it should.	3.77	1.17	0.84

<b>Turnover Intention</b>	3.24	1.03	
I'll likely start looking for a new job shortly.	3.44	1.21	0.91
It wouldn't take much to get me out of this hotel.	3.11	.97	0.87
I regularly consider leaving this motel.	3.19	1.20	0.92
<b>Social Exchange</b>	3.63	.69	
The majority of our guests are courteous.	3.48	1.02	0.73
I think our guests value the services I provide.	4.00	.89	0.75
Our guests seldom complain to me.	3.55	1.12	0.72
I believe that our guests are satisfied with the services that our hotel offers.	3.39	1.17	0.88
I feel our guests are pleased to stay at our hotel.	4.06	.85	0.91
Among my employees, there is support for my values and goals.	3.84	1.03	0.81
When I go into trouble, my coworkers will assist me.	3.71	1.06	0.81
My coworkers are concerned for my well.	3.81	.94	0.78
My coworkers are ready to help me perform better.	3.23	1.08	0.79
My colleagues are interested in my viewpoints.	3.65	1.08	0.83
My coworkers will congratulate me on my work achievements.	3.77	.88	0.85
My direct supervisor is aware of my potential.	3.71	.93	0.71
My relationship with my immediate supervisor is good.	3.77	.88	0.72
I am aware of how satisfied my direct supervisor is with my performance.	3.42	1.25	0.71
<b>* Mean score; Low: 1.00 to 2.33, Average (Moderate): 2.34 to 3.66, High: 3.67 to 5.00</b>			

Additionally, the composite reliability values (ranging from 0.80 to 0.95) are greater than 0.7, indicating construct reliability (Manley *et al.*, 2020). Also, the extracted average variance (AVEs) values are greater than 0.5 (see Table 3), which proves convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2020).

**Table (3): Composite Reliability and AVEs**

Construct /Items	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Occupational Stress	0.88	0.58
Turnover Intention	0.94	0.81
Social Exchange	0.95	0.62
Problem Solving Coping Strategy	0.94	0.76
Avoidance Coping Strategy	0.85	0.67
Seeking Support Coping Strategy	0.80	0.62

Discriminant validity was also achieved in this study. Inter-construct correlations indicate that the square root of each latent variable's AVEs is larger than the correlation with the other latent variables (see Table 4).

**Table (4): Discriminant validity**

Constructs	Avoidance	Turnover Intention	Occupational Stress	Problem Solving	Seeking Support	Social Exchange
Avoidance	<b>0.816</b>					
Turnover Intention	0.452	<b>0.899</b>				
Occupational Stress	0.463	0.481	<b>0.721</b>			
Problem Solving	0.443	0.431	0.358	<b>0.874</b>		
Seeking Support	0.269	0.361	0.409	0.533	<b>0.717</b>	
Social Exchange	0.346	0.487	0.251	0.771	0.428	<b>0.745</b>

**Model fit and quality indices for the research model**

The current study employed the PLS-SEM technique by using WarpPLS software 7.0 to evaluate the measurement and structural model as well as to confirm the research hypotheses (Kock, 2020). PLS-SEM is a method of analysis that is often used in many situations, such as research on tourism and hospitality (Hair *et al.*, 2020). There are 10 model fit and quality indices included in the WarpPLS 7.0 program (see Table 5). Therefore, it can be said that the ten-model fit and quality indices criteria were satisfied.

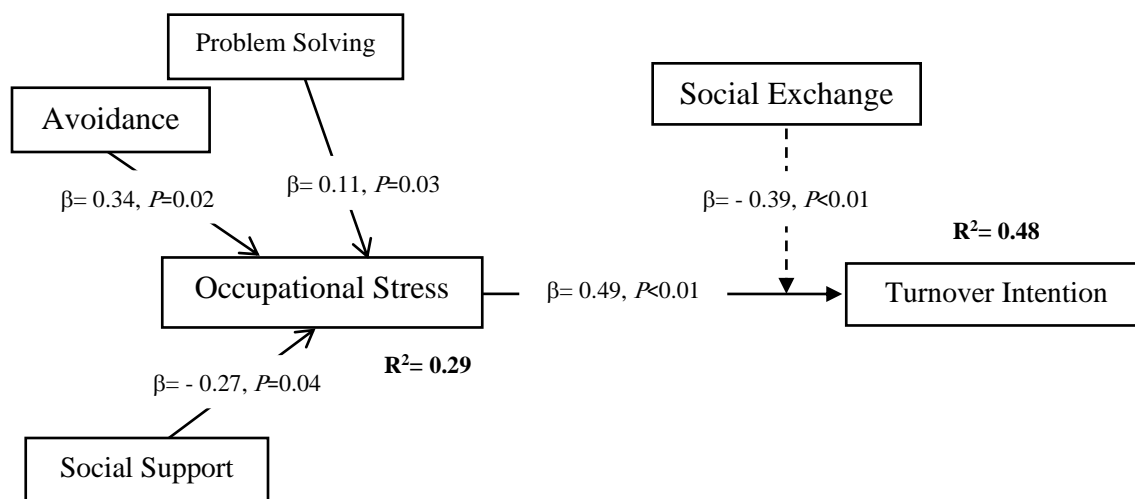
**Table (5): Model fit and quality indices**

	Assessment	Criterion	Supported/Rejected
Average path coefficient (APC)	0.273, P=0.023	P<0.05	Supported
Average R-squared (ARS)	0.387, P=0.004	P<0.05	Supported
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)	0.315, P=0.013	P<0.05	Supported
Average block VIF (AVIF)	3.428	acceptable if $\leq 5$ , ideally $\leq 3.3$	Supported
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	2.233	acceptable if $\leq 5$ , ideally $\leq 3.3$	Supported
TenenhausGoF (GoF)	0.515	small $\geq 0.1$ , medium $\geq 0.25$ , large $\geq 0.36$	Supported
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)	0.833	acceptable if $\geq 0.7$ , ideally = 1	Supported
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	0.969	acceptable if $\geq 0.9$ , ideally = 1	Supported
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	1.000	acceptable if $\geq 0.7$	Supported
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	1.000	acceptable if $\geq 0.7$	Supported

**The structural models for hypotheses testing**

Path coefficient analysis ( $\beta$ ), P-value, and R-square ( $R^2$ ) were used to analyze the structural models. The results (Figure 2) of the hypotheses tests show that there is a positive impact of

problem-solving coping strategy on occupational stress ( $\beta = 0.11, P=0.03$ ), rejecting hypothesis 1. The findings also revealed that there is a positive impact of avoidance coping strategy on occupational stress ( $\beta=0.34, P=0.02$ ), accepting H2. Also, seeking social support coping strategy negatively impacts occupational stress ( $\beta=-0.27, P=0.04$ ), supporting H3. The results also revealed that there is a positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention ( $\beta= 0.49, P<0.01$ ). So, H4 was accepted. Furthermore, social exchange plays a moderating role in the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention ( $\beta=-0.39P<0.01$ ). So, H5 was accepted. This means that social exchange dampens the positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention. Figure 2 also revealed that stress coping strategies interpreted 29% of the variance in occupational stress ( $R^2= 0.29$ ). Also, occupational stress explained 48% of the variance in turnover intention ( $R^2= 0.48$ ).



**Figure 2:** Final results of the study model and hypotheses

## Discussions

The findings of this study revealed that there is a positive relationship between problem-focused coping strategy and occupational stress, the more employees' adoption of problem-focused coping strategy the more stress they experience at work. Since not everyone is capable of taking control of a situation or perceives a situation as manageable, problem-focused coping does not function in any situation where the source of the stress cannot be controlled and removed by the individual (Carroll, 2013). In the hotel industry, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the unstable working conditions employees faced "i.e. employees' takeoff, downsizing, and restricted compensation" made them feel pessimistic about their future in the hotel industry. This, in turn, increases their stress because the source of the stress is beyond their control, thus such problem-focused coping strategies are not helpful for them. Moreover, Aldwin (2004) claimed that people's capacity to learn coping strategies and their success is dependent on the efficiency of the solutions provided by culture and the quality of the institutions that teach them. Coping styles that focused on self-assertion and accomplishment enhancement, such as those seen in problem-focused coping strategies, were linked to higher levels of stress (Allen & Leary, 2010). Also, attempting to cope in ways that contradict the prevailing cultural ethos may raise stress, even though the same tactics adopted by members of another culture may be effective in lowering stress (Aldwin, 2004).

The findings also revealed that there is a positive impact of avoidance coping strategies on occupational stress. This finding is in line with the findings of prior studies (e.g., Duschek *et al.*, 2020; Elziny & Kamel, 2020; Trianasari & Rahmawati, 2020; Chua *et al.*, 2022). Employees adopting an avoidance strategy choose to focus more on pleasant than unpleasant situations and try to divert their attention from a problem by occupying themselves with other activities to reach temporary comfort. Doing so does not mean that employees can control or remove the source of stress. In addition, when employees use this strategy to avoid something that gives them anxiety, they frequently create a scenario in which they have to face it more. Thus, avoidance coping is considered unhealthy since it frequently triggers stress without assisting employees in dealing with the stressors (Dijkstra *et al.*, 2016).

In addition, the current study assumes that there is a negative relationship between seeking social support and coping strategies for occupational stress. The findings confirmed these hypotheses and indicated that the more employees rely on seeking social support for coping strategies, the less stress they experience at work. This finding is in line with the findings of prior studies (e.g., Reid & Taylor, 2015; Huang *et al.*, 2018; Kahar & Wee, 2020; Yousaf *et al.*, 2020), where social support has an impact on the stress response by reducing how stressful work is perceived, which in turn reduces the chance of unfavorable consequences like psychological illness. Also, it was suggested that social support has a protective impact on job stress, that it improves the quality of life by lowering the negative consequences of work stress, and that it shapes how a person adapts to stress (Arkan, 2021).

Furthermore, the findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention. The finding confirmed the fourth hypothesis and indicated that the more employees experience stress at work, the more they intend to leave their jobs. This finding is consistent with the findings of prior studies (e.g., O'Neill & Davis, 2011; Demirdağ *et al.*, 2020; Li *et al.*, 2021; Jolly *et al.*, 2022) where employees' negative physical and psychological health symptoms are linked to workplace stress, which also leads to dissatisfaction and, ultimately, forces employees to leave the work. In addition, the hospitality industry has demanding job requirements, including long hours and uncomfortable working conditions. When a worker's capacity to handle the demands of the job is out of balance, occupational stress occurs (Ullrich & FitzGerald, 1990). Workplace stress has a significant impact on employees' job satisfaction and organizational commitment, which are key indicators of turnover (Mosadeghrad, 2013).

Ultimately, the results of the current research demonstrated that social exchange significantly moderates the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention, which confirmed the fifth hypothesis. In other words, social exchange dampens the positive relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention. The social exchange between coworkers, supervisors, and customers is a crucial component of the social support network at work (Karatepe, 2013; Michelle *et al.*, 2013; Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017). It appears that having a good social exchange at work is a crucial resource that contributes to successful outcomes (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017) and helps employees manage work-related stress (Abugre, 2017; Fong *et al.*, 2018; Park *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, encouraging coworkers and managers can make it easier for employees to complete their tasks, potentially mitigating the negative effects of heavy workloads (Pomaki *et al.*, 2010). They can support employees in developing adaptive coping skills, which can result in a more productive and stress-free work environment (Ma *et al.*, 2021). Hotels are known for being high-workload environments, particularly for front-line staff who must be customer-focused, handle a variety of requests from customers, and address disgruntled ones. To properly

service clients and deal with work-related stress, they, therefore, require assistance from coworkers and supervisors (Karatepe & Olugbade, 2017). Hospitality industry personnel may manage stress, maintain their job happiness, engage in their occupations, and have less turnover intention when they have a good social exchange with their coworkers, supervisors, and guests (Yousaf *et al.*, 2020).

### **Theoretical Implications**

This study has two main theoretical contributions to the hospitality literature. First, by concurrently analyzing the relative impacts of three different stress coping strategies on occupational stress for hotel employees. The current study broadens the knowledge base in this area of study by demonstrating that, among the three strategies, seeking social support was shown to be relatively more effective at reducing occupational stress among hotel employees. Second, by examining the moderating role of social exchange on the relationship between occupational stress and turnover intention, the study adds another significant factor to the model and demonstrates that social exchange has a significant moderating role in mitigating the effect of occupational stress on hotel employees' turnover intentions.

### **Practical Implications**

There are several implications of this study for hotel human resource management. First, it's essential to recognize the negative consequences incurred by employee turnover. The occupational stress of hotel employees must be emphasized because it was substantially correlated with higher turnover intentions. Hiring professional counselors to offer psychological counseling to staff members experiencing high levels of occupational stress should be supported by the hotels. Second, creating an organizational culture that encourages social interaction would be beneficial in minimizing employee stress and the likelihood of turnover. Such a culture ought to promote servant and prosocial leadership, which are characterized by socially supportive traits. Additionally, planning charitable events and sporting contests may be useful in fostering shared goals and norms among staff members, reducing stress at work, and fostering social exchange. Third, social contact is negatively associated with work stress and, as a result, employees' intentions to leave. This might suggest that positive social interactions can drive employees to go above and beyond the call of duty. As a result, hotel managers should care about their employees and inspire them to help coworkers by fostering a healthy team culture in which helping behaviors are rewarded. A helping atmosphere should be fostered by hotels' human resources management, so that going above and beyond may become a standard procedure for the industry.

### **Limitations and further research**

There are certain limitations in this study that should be addressed in future research. First, this study investigated the effect of specific three strategies of stress coping on occupational stress. Further studies would be needed to investigate the effect of other different stress coping strategies (e.g., distancing, adaptation, confronting). Second, this study examined the moderating role of social exchange. Additional research is required to examine the impact of different moderators (e.g., personality differences, and leadership styles). Third, the survey was self-reported, which might raise concerns about the reliability of the findings and cause social desirability bias. So, more longitudinal studies are required. Fourth, because the data were gathered from five-star hotels in the Sharm EL-Sheikh region of Egypt, there may be a limit on

how widely the findings may be applied to hotels in other regions or countries. This opens the door for more comparative research.

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### تأثير استراتيجيات المواجهة على الإجهاد المهني وانعكاسه على نية دوران الموظفين في الفنادق: الدور المعدل للتبادل الاجتماعي

الملخص العربي

تبحث هذه الدراسة في تأثير ثلاث استراتيجيات للتكيف مع الضغوط المهنية وهي حل المشكلات وتجنبها وطلب الدعم الاجتماعي على نية دوران الموظفين في الفنادق مع الأخذ في الاعتبار الدور المعدل للتبادل الاجتماعي. تم استخدام الاستبيان للحصول على المعلومات من موظفي سلاسل الفنادق الخمس نجوم بمنطقة شرم الشيخ في مصر. تم استخدام مجموعة متنوعة من طرق أخذ العينات. تم جمع وتحليل 398 إجابة صالحة باستخدام PLS-SEM. أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة إيجابية بين إستراتيجية حل المشكلات والتكيف مع الضغوط المهنية. كما أظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة إيجابية بين استراتيجية التجنب وضغوط العمل، وعلاقة سلبية بين استراتيجية طلب الدعم الاجتماعي مع الضغوط المهنية. كما أسفرت النتائج عن علاقة إيجابية بين الضغوط المهنية ونية دوران الموظفين. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، أشارت النتائج إلى أن التبادل الاجتماعي يلعب دورًا معدل ويخفف من العلاقة الإيجابية بين ضغوط العمل المهني ونية دوران الموظفين. يقدم البحث مساهمة نظرية حيث يساعد على توسيع قاعدة المعرفة فيما يتعلق باستراتيجيات التعامل مع ضغوط العمل، التبادل الاجتماعي، ونية الدوران في سياق صناعة الفنادق. عملياً، يقدم البحث لإدارة الموارد البشرية بالفنادق توصيات للتعامل بشكل صحيح مع الضغوط المهنية ودوران الموظفين إلى جانب تعظيم فوائد التبادل الاجتماعي. اشتمل البحث أيضا على عرض محددات البحث والتوجيهات المحتملة للبحوث في المستقبل.

الكلمات الرئيسية: استراتيجيات المواجهة، الضغوط المهنية، نية دوران الموظفين، التبادل الاجتماعي، الفنادق.