

THE ROLE OF WORK MOTIVATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL JUSTICE IN EMPLOYEE STRESS: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY



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ABSTRACT

Job stress has emerged as a critical issue in Vietnam's rapidly expanding food and beverage industry, where intensive workloads, long working hours, and high service demands expose employees to substantial psychological pressure. This study examines the relationships between work motivation, distributive justice, career orientation, and job stress to identify key factors associated with employees' stress experiences in the food and beverage sector. A cross-sectional research design was employed, using survey data collected from 123 employees working in food and beverage businesses in southern Vietnam. Standardized measurement scales were used to assess motivation dimensions, distributive justice, career orientation, and job stress, and the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, one-way analysis of variance, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple linear regression. The results reveal that amotivation is positively associated with job stress ($\beta = 0.528, p < 0.001$), whereas introjected regulation ($\beta = -0.193, p < 0.05$) and distributive justice ($\beta = -0.166, p < 0.05$) are negatively associated with job stress. Employees working fewer than seven hours per day report significantly lower levels of identified regulation and integrated regulation than those working longer hours. No statistically significant direct relationship is observed between career orientation and job stress. The essential findings indicate that motivation-related factors and distributive justice explain a meaningful proportion of the variance in job stress. In contrast, career orientation does not significantly enhance the model's explanatory power.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's workplaces, job stress is a serious concern. It affects employees' health, job satisfaction, and productivity. Job stress occurs when work demands exceed a person's capacity to handle them, resulting in both physical and emotional pressure (The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, 2014). This is not only a personal problem but also an organizational issue. High stress levels can lead to absenteeism (not coming to work) and presenteeism (working while unwell or underperforming), which reduce overall productivity (Brunner et al., 2019; Halkos & Bousinakis, 2010). Also, stressed employees are more likely to think about quitting their jobs (Jung & Yoon, 2014; Kachi et al., 2020).

The Food and Beverage (F&B) sector is especially vulnerable to job stress. This is because the work is fast-paced, customer-focused, and physically demanding. F&B workers often work long hours, including nights and weekends, meet high customer demand, and maintain high service quality (Wu et al., 2014). These conditions often lead to tiredness and emotional burnout. According to iPOS.vn and Nestlé Professional (2025), there were about 323,010 F&B stores in Vietnam in 2024 a 1.8% increase in number and a 16.6% rise in revenue compared to 2023. This rapid growth has increased competition and pressure on workers to perform well. While the sector is expanding economically, most research has

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focused on turnover (Han, 2023), intention to stay (Nguyen et al., 2025), or business and customer views. The mental health and career motivation of F&B employees, especially stress-related issues, have received little attention.

Zoppiatis and Orphanides (2009) stated that in Cyprus, one in every three employees in the food and beverage industry experiences high levels of occupational burnout. The study also revealed that women are more vulnerable to burnout-related symptoms. Moreover, emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were primarily associated with job satisfaction and organizational justice. In contrast, personal accomplishment was mainly associated with the quality of the organizational environment, autonomy in decision-making, and recognition of performance. The way employees cope with personal stressors is considered to significantly influence their work motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational loyalty. In addition, the study found that personal stressors have a slightly positive impact on employees' work motivation and loyalty (Mai & Ung, 2020). According to Norizan et al. (2022), organizational justice was the most important factor contributing to employees' turnover intention. When employees perceive a lack of fairness in compensation and working conditions, they are more likely to experience a decline in work motivation and develop turnover intentions. In contrast, the implementation of appropriate reward systems enables employees to perceive a fair balance between their work effort and their real-life needs. In Japan, Kobayashi and Kondo (2019) found that higher levels of psychological distress were observed among both female and male workers who perceived low organizational justice, regardless of their occupational position. These findings suggest that organizational justice may be an important environmental factor influencing employees' mental health, regardless of workplace structure, labor systems, or organizational culture. Furthermore, the study by Sia and Tan (2016) emphasized that perceptions of distributive justice need to be strengthened to enhance job satisfaction, reduce employee turnover, and improve overall performance.

Based on the above empirical evidence, employee stress in the food and beverage sector arises not only from the inherently high demands of the job but also from psychological and organizational factors, particularly work motivation and organizational justice. Work motivation functions as an internal mechanism that helps employees sustain commitment and adapt to occupational pressures. At the same time, organizational justice shapes their perceptions of fairness in the allocation of resources, opportunities, and performance recognition. When these factors are inadequately addressed, the risk of psychological stress, burnout, and turnover intention increases. Therefore, adopting a cross-sectional approach to examine the relationships among work motivation, organizational justice, and employee stress in the F&B sector is essential to provide empirical evidence for human resource management strategies that protect employees' mental health and enhance workforce sustainability. It is important to study the causes of job stress among F&B employees, as this sector plays a key role in Vietnam's economy and workforce. Understanding how stress connects with motivation, fairness, and career goals can help improve employee well-being and company performance. This study will examine job stress among F&B workers in Vietnam and explore related factors. By identifying key stressors and their effects on attitudes and behavior, the research aims to propose practical changes to improve workplace practices in the F&B industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The F&B Industry in Vietnam

The global F&B industry plays a significant role in the world economy, covering a wide range of businesses, from luxury restaurants to fast-food chains. This labor-intensive sector often faces challenges in human resource management, with exceptionally high employee turnover, which is more severe than in many other industries (Davidson et al., 2010). Because the industry depends heavily on human capital, effective employee management is important for long-term growth and competitiveness.

In Vietnam, the F&B sector has grown quickly in recent years due to economic reforms, fast urbanization, and changes in consumer habits. The Vietnam Food and Beverage Market Report 2024 shows a 16.6% increase in revenue from 2023 to 2024, reaching about VND 688.8 trillion, with around 323,010 F&B businesses expected by the end of 2024 (iPOS.vn & Nestlé Professional, 2024). Higher disposable incomes and the trend of eating out have increased the demand for food services. However, this rapid development has created new challenges in managing employees, including improving retention, developing skills, and ensuring service quality. Recent studies emphasize the importance of employee motivation and ongoing improvement to solve these issues in Vietnam's F&B industry (Nguyen et al., 2025).

Job Stress in the F&B Sector

Job stress is a common problem in the F&B industry, caused by both workplace conditions and external factors. Emotional labor, as defined by Grandey (2000), is highly relevant in food service jobs, where workers must manage their emotions to meet customer expectations. This emotional effort, combined with physical tasks and time pressure, creates significant mental stress.

Jung et al. (2012) reported that food service employees face higher job stress than those in other service industries. Significant sources of stress include irregular work hours, high-pressure settings, and complex customer interactions. These factors often lead to low job satisfaction and a greater desire to leave the job. Likewise, Nguyen et al. (2025) found that strong internal motivation and Kaizen skill development help reduce stress-related turnover by encouraging employees to stay with their companies.

Karatepe and Uludag (2007) also studied work-family conflict in hospitality. They found that irregular and demanding work schedules increase stress by interfering with personal responsibilities. This highlights the importance of work-life balance policies in managing employee stress in the F&B sector.

Motivation and Job Stress

Understanding employee motivation in the F&B industry requires both theoretical and practical perspectives. Self-Determination Theory (SDT), developed by Ryan and Deci (2000), explains motivation through two types: autonomous motivation, which comes from internal values and interests, and controlled motivation, which is driven by external pressures. Their research shows that autonomous motivation is more closely linked to better performance and well-being. Kuvaas (2006) also found that performance reviews focused on personal development improve intrinsic motivation more effectively than those based solely on evaluation results. This is important for the F&B sector, where feedback-based development can help improve employee satisfaction and reduce turnover. Motivation and job stress are closely connected. Studies have consistently shown that high work stress lowers motivation (Edin et al., 2024; Li et al., 2014; Zhao et al., 2016). This negative relationship appears across many jobs, including healthcare and hospitality. Work motivation includes two types: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards such as salary, job security, and recognition. When employees work hard but do not receive fair rewards, they may experience an effort-reward imbalance. This imbalance can lead to stress, emotional exhaustion, and health problems (Khalid et al., 2020; Kinman, 2019; Mark & Smith, 2012). In contrast, intrinsic motivation, driven by personal interest and internal satisfaction, helps reduce job stress and burnout. Employees with strong intrinsic motivation often report lower stress levels in fields such as hospitality, banking, and healthcare (Jeon et al., 2022; Karatepe & Tekinkus, 2006; Zhao et al., 2016).

Career Orientation and Job Stress

According to Schein, career orientation refers to a person's self-perceived attitudes, skills, and values that shape their occupational identity and influence their career choices and work environments (Maher, 2017). In the F&B industry, employees with a clear career orientation often experience less job stress because they view their current roles as important steps toward long-term goals. In contrast, those without clear direction may experience greater stress due to uncertainty and a lack of progress. Liu-Lastres et al. (2023) found that hospitality workers with clear career plans could handle stress more effectively, reducing psychological distress. Similarly, Rasool et al. (2021) found that employees who perceived good career development opportunities experienced lower workplace stress and emotional exhaustion. These findings highlight the protective effect of career orientation in high-pressure service industries, such as the F&B sector.

Distributive Justice and Job Stress

Distributive justice refers to employees' perceptions of fairness in the distribution of outcomes such as pay, recognition, and promotions (Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 1987). Greenberg (1987) categorized theories of organizational justice and argued that perceived fairness strongly influences employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance. Colquitt et al. (2001) conducted a meta-analysis and confirmed that distributive justice is a strong predictor of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intention to stay. This is especially important in the F&B industry, where reward systems are often inconsistent. Simons and Roberson (2003) found that shared perceptions of fairness in restaurant teams influenced both customer service quality and employee retention. These results show that justice is not only a personal issue but also a group-level factor that can affect overall performance. In the high-stress F&B environment, fair treatment helps reduce feelings of burnout and exploitation. Tremblay et al. (2010) showed that distributive justice improves task performance and commitment while lowering burnout and stress. Overall, prior studies indicate that job stress in the F&B sector is widespread, driven by demanding work conditions as well as psychological and organizational factors. Empirical evidence consistently shows that work motivation, career orientation, and distributive justice shape employees' stress levels, well-being, and work-related attitudes. However, empirical research integrating these factors within the Vietnamese F&B industry remains limited. Therefore, based on the existing literature, this study aims to examine the relationships among work motivation, career orientation, distributive justice, and job stress among employees in the F&B sector in Vietnam. By adopting a cross-sectional research design, this study aims to provide evidence to support human resource management strategies that reduce job stress, enhance employee well-being, and promote workforce sustainability in the F&B industry. The main hypotheses are as follows:

- H₁:** Work motivation would be significantly associated with job stress.
- H₂:** Career orientation would be significantly associated with job stress.
- H₃:** Distributive justice would be significantly associated with job stress.

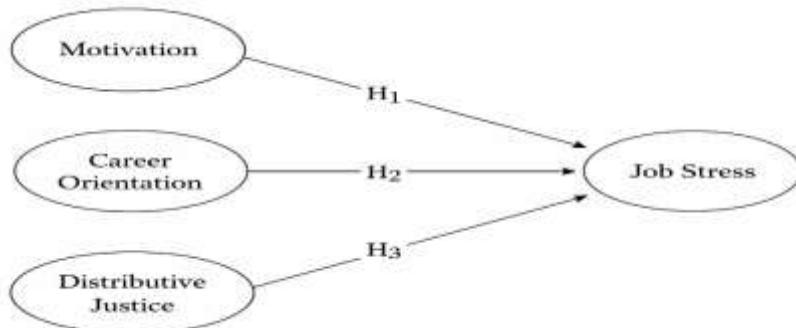


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study uses a cross-sectional design and applies convenience sampling to collect data. The participants are employees from various F&B businesses in southern Vietnam. Before joining the study, all participants received an informed consent form explaining the study's purpose and the type of data to be collected. Participation was confirmed only after they gave written or verbal consent.

Procedures

Data were collected from April to June 2024 using two primary methods: an online survey through Google Forms and a direct survey. To reach participants, the researchers worked with HR departments of selected F&B companies to distribute the questionnaire to their employees. The survey was also shared on social media platforms such as Facebook to increase participation. All participation was voluntary, and individuals could withdraw at any time without affecting their jobs. During data collection, researchers were available to answer questions and ensure transparency. To ensure the accuracy of the measurement scales, the study used both conceptual translation and back-translation methods. Two independent bilingual experts translated the scales from English to Vietnamese and then back to English. All items were carefully reviewed to confirm that the translations reflected both cultural and conceptual meanings (WHO/UNESCAP Project on Health and Disability Statistics, 2006).

Ethical Considerations

The study complied with international ethical standards emphasizing voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality. All identifying details were excluded, and data were collected anonymously. In line with the Ethical Review of Biomedical Research Involving Human Beings issued by China's National Health and Wellness Commission (2019), formal approval is required only for biomedical or life science studies. As this research addressed industrial and organizational psychology topics, ethics committee review was not necessary. The exemption was further justified because participants were adults, the data contained no sensitive content, vulnerable groups were not included, and there was no potential for harm or disclosure. All respondents confirmed their consent after reviewing an introductory statement on the survey form that explained that participation was voluntary, uncompensated, risk-free, and could be withdrawn at any time. No data were collected from minors under 18 years of age. The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2025) and followed the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (American Psychological Association, 2017).

Measurements

Motivation

The Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale, developed by Tremblay et al. (2009), includes 18 items measuring six types of motivation based on Self-Determination Theory. These are: *Intrinsic Motivation* (e.g., "Because I derive much pleasure from learning new things"), *Integrated Regulation* (e.g., "Because it has become a fundamental part of who I am"), *Identified Regulation* (e.g., "Because this is the type of work I chose to do to attain a certain lifestyle"), *Introjected Regulation* (e.g., "Because I want to succeed at this job, if not I would be very ashamed of myself"), *External Regulation* (e.g., "For the income it provides me"), and *Amotivation* (e.g., "I ask myself this question, I do not seem to be able to manage the important tasks related to this work"). Responses are rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (does not correspond at all) to 7 (corresponds exactly). In the original study, subscales showed acceptable reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values from 0.64 (AMO) to 0.83 (INTEG). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.604 (AMO) to 0.855 (INTEG).

Job Stress

The Job Stress Scale, created by Shukla and Srivastava (2016), measures job-related stress through 9 items. It assesses stress based on work roles and expectations (e.g., "I have a lot of work and fear that I have very little time to do it"). Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The original study reported good reliability with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.81. In this study, the scale demonstrated excellent reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.902).

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice refers to employees' perceptions of the fairness of outcome distributions, such as salaries. This study used Colquitt's (2001) 4-item scale (e.g., "Is your salary appropriate for the work you have completed?"), rated on a 7-point scale from 1 (to a minimal extent) to 7 (to a considerable extent). The original scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93, and in this study, the reliability remained high at 0.936.

Career Orientation

The Career Orientation Scale, adapted from Bravo et al. (2015), measures employees' career goals and values. It includes three subscales: *Entrepreneurial Creativity Orientation* (e.g., "I am very good at developing innovative new procedures, products, or services"), *Lifestyle Orientation* (e.g., "It is important to me that I have a job that provides 'family-friendly' benefits so that I can balance my work and home life"), and *Technical/Functional Orientation* (e.g., "I would pursue a position that would allow me to become more proficient in my technical/functional specialty"). Items are rated on a 7-point

Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). In the original study, Cronbach's alpha values were 0.90, 0.85, and 0.84 for the three subscales. In this study, reliability scores were also high: 0.872 (Entrepreneurial Creativity), 0.919 (Lifestyle), and 0.951 (Technical/Functional).

Data Analysis

After data collection, responses were coded and filtered in Excel, then transferred to SPSS for statistical analysis. Z-scores were calculated following Mishra et al. (2019) to assess univariate normality and detect extreme values at the scale level, thereby evaluating the suitability of parametric analyses. Given that the sample size fell within the moderate range ($50 < n < 300$), z-scores were required to remain within ± 3.29 . All scale scores met this criterion, indicating acceptable distributional properties and supporting the use of parametric statistical procedures. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic characteristics. Independent-samples t-tests and a one-way ANOVA with Tukey HSD post hoc tests were conducted to compare scale scores across demographic groups. Pearson correlation analysis was applied to examine associations among variables, and multiple linear regression was used to construct the predictive model. Statistical significance was set at $p = 0.05$.

RESULTS

The socio-demographic characteristics of the 123 participants are presented in Table 1. Among them, 66.7% ($n = 82$) are female, and 33.3% ($n = 41$) are male. Most participants are aged 19–24 years (56.9%, $n = 70$), followed by those aged 25–29 years (30.1%, $n = 37$), and participants aged 30 and above (13.0%, $n = 16$). Regarding sleep duration, the majority report sleeping 6–7 hours per night (59.3%, $n = 73$), while 26.8% ($n = 33$) sleep 3–5 hours, and 13.8% ($n = 17$) sleep 8–10 hours. For working hours per day, 92.7% ($n = 114$) work 8 hours or more. Of these, 54.5% ($n = 67$) work exactly 8 hours, and 38.2% ($n = 47$) work over 9 hours per day. Only 7.3% ($n = 9$) report working fewer than 7 hours daily.

Table 1. Socio-demographic of Participants ($n = 123$).

Items	n	%
Gender		
Female	82	66.7
Male	41	33.3
Age Group		
19-24 years old	70	56,9
25-29 Years old	37	30,1
>30 Years old	16	13,0
Sleeping Hours per day		
3-5 hours	33	26.8
6-7 hours	73	59.3
8-10 hours	17	13.8
Working Hours per day		
<7 hours	9	7.3
8 hours	67	54.5
>9 hours	47	38.2

Note: n = number of participants, % = percentage.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of working hours on four motivation scales. The results showed a statistically significant difference in IDENT scores across work-hour groups ($F_{(2, 120)} = 7.035, p = 0.001$). Tukey's HSD post hoc test indicated that participants working 8 hours per day ($M = 4.29, SD = 1.40$) had significantly higher IDENT scores than those working fewer than 7 hours ($M = 2.67, SD = 1.07$), $p = 0.004$, 95% CI [0.431, 2.812]. Likewise, those working more than 9 hours per day ($M = 4.60, SD = 1.49$) also scored significantly higher than those working fewer than 7 hours per day, $p = 0.001$, 95% CI [0.708, 3.149]. However, no significant difference was found between the 8-hour and over-9-hour groups ($p > 0.05$). Similarly, a one-way ANOVA showed a significant difference in INTEG scores by work hours ($F_{(2, 120)} = 8.036, p = 0.001$). Participants who worked 8 hours per day ($M = 4.07, SD = 1.33$) scored significantly higher than those who worked fewer than 7 hours ($M = 2.37, SD = 1.31$), $p = 0.002$, 95% CI [0.521, 2.887]. Those working over 9 hours per day ($M = 4.42, SD = 1.52$) also had higher INTEG scores than those working fewer than 7 hours per day, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.835, 3.260]. However, there was no significant difference between the 8-hour and over-9-hour groups ($p > 0.05$), indicating that working more than 9 hours does not further improve integrated regulation.

Table 2. Comparison of Four Scales Across Working Hours ($n = 123$).

	IDENT (M \pm SD)	EXTER (M \pm SD)	AMO (M \pm SD)	INTRI (M \pm SD)	INTEG (M \pm SD)	INTRO (M \pm SD)
Working Hours*	$p = 0.001$	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$	$p = 0.001$	$p < 0.05$
<7 hours	2.67 \pm 1.07	4.56 \pm 1.20	3.00 \pm 1.26	3.81 \pm 1.43	2.37 \pm 1.31	2.89 \pm 1.35
8 hours	4.29 \pm 1.40	4.76 \pm 1.24	3.12 \pm 1.18	4.83 \pm 1.43	4.07 \pm 1.33	4.06 \pm 1.43
>9 hours	4.60 \pm 1.49	4.65 \pm 1.30	2.81 \pm 1.36	5.01 \pm 1.50	4.42 \pm 1.52	4.31 \pm 1.66

Note: DENT = Identified Regulation, EXTER = External Regulation, AMO = Amotivation, INTRI = Intrinsic Motivation, INTEG = Integrated Regulation, INTRO = Introjected Regulation, ECO = Entrepreneurial Creativity Orientation, LO = Lifestyle Orientation, TFO = Technical/Functional Orientation, JS = Job Stress, DJ = Distributive Justice.

*ANOVA with Tukey HSD post-hoc.

For INTRO, one-way ANOVA also revealed a significant difference across work-hour groups ($F_{(2, 120)} = 3.326$, $p = 0.039$). Tukey's HSD test showed that individuals working more than 9 hours per day ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.66$) had significantly higher INTRO scores than those working fewer than 7 hours ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 1.35$), $p = 0.030$, 95% CI [0.113, 2.733]. No significant differences were found between the 8-hour group and the other groups.

In contrast, no statistically significant differences were found across work-hour groups for EXTER, AMO, CO, JS, and DS (all $p > 0.05$). Full details are provided in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Four Scales Across Working Hours (n = 123).

	ECO (M \pm SD)	LO (M \pm SD)	TFO (M \pm SD)	JS (M \pm SD)	DJ (M \pm SD)
Working Hours*	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$	$p > 0.05$
<7 hours	4.58 \pm 1.08	5.62 \pm 1.30	5.62 \pm 1.70	3.02 \pm 0.73	4.08 \pm 1.90
8 hours	4.71 \pm 1.23	5.72 \pm 1.10	5.74 \pm 1.12	2.81 \pm 0.92	4.09 \pm 1.36
>9 hours	4.71 \pm 1.26	5.30 \pm 1.41	5.37 \pm 1.56	2.78 \pm 0.98	4.30 \pm 1.64

Note: DENT = Identified Regulation, EXTER = External Regulation, AMO = Amotivation, INTRI = Intrinsic Motivation, INTEG = Integrated Regulation, INTRO = Introjected Regulation, ECO = Entrepreneurial Creativity Orientation, LO = Lifestyle Orientation, TFO = Technical/Functional Orientation, JS = Job Stress, DJ = Distributive Justice.

*ANOVA with Tukey HSD post-hoc.

The Pearson correlation revealed a statistically significant association between AMO ($r = 0.437$, $p < 0.001$) and JS, as well as between DJ and JS ($r = -0.213$, $p < 0.05$). However, other variables, including DENT, EXTER, INTRI, INTEG, INTRO, ECO, LO, and TFO, were not significantly associated with JS (all $p > 0.05$). Several motivation subscales showed high intercorrelations ($r > 0.70$), consistent with previous studies using the Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale, which found that motivation types theoretically adjacent to each other were strongly correlated (Tremblay et al., 2009). Refer to Table 4 for detailed correlation results.

Table 4. Pearson Correlation (n = 123).

	JS	DENT	EXTER	AMO	INTRI	INTEG	INTRO	ECO	LO	TFO
JS	1									
DENT	-0.076	1								
EXTER	-0.089	0.550***	1							
AMO	0.437***	0.219*	0.242**	1						
INTRI	-0.076	0.847***	0.580***	0.205*	1					
INTEG	-0.008	0.833***	0.510***	0.300***	0.713***	1				
INTRO	-0.009	0.748***	0.498***	0.449***	0.725***	0.749***	1			
ECO	-0.012	0.471***	0.269**	0.096	0.494***	0.423***	0.439***	1		
LO	-0.010	0.378***	0.418***	0.181*	0.443***	0.320***	0.349***	0.613***	1	
TFO	-0.104	0.485***	0.371***	0.112	0.552***	0.403***	0.439***	0.647***	0.815***	1
DJ	-0.213*	0.437***	0.463***	0.028	0.432***	0.413***	0.316***	0.285***	0.283***	0.345***

Note: DENT = Identified Regulation, EXTER = External Regulation, AMO = Amotivation, INTRI = Intrinsic Motivation, INTEG = Integrated Regulation, INTRO = Introjected Regulation, ECO = Entrepreneurial Creativity Orientation, LO = Lifestyle Orientation, TFO = Technical/Functional Orientation, JS = Job Stress, DJ = Distributive Justice.

*** $p \leq 0.001$

** $p < 0.01$

* $p < 0.05$

A stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was performed to examine whether selected variables significantly predicted JS. The overall model was statistically significant, with an Adjusted R^2 of 0.249, $F_{(3, 119)} = 14.503$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 5. Model Summary^d

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.437 ^a	0.191	0.184	0.83746	
2	0.493 ^b	0.243	0.231	0.81314	
3	0.517 ^c	0.268	0.249	0.80325	1.793

a. Predictors: (Constant), Amotivation.

b. Predictors: (Constant), Amotivation, Introjected Regulation.

c. Predictors: (Constant), Amotivation, Introjected Regulation, Distributive Justice.

d. Dependent Variable: Job Stress.

Three predictors were found to be significant: AMO ($B = 0.528$, $p < 0.001$, 95% CI [0.260, 0.519]), INTRO ($B = -0.193$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.277, -0.005]), and DJ ($B = -0.166$, $p < 0.05$, 95% CI [-0.205, -0.001]). These results indicate that higher levels of AMO are associated with increased job stress, while higher levels of INTRO and DJ are associated with reduced job stress. The regression equation is: $JS = 2.547 + 0.390(AMO) - 0.116(INTRO) - 0.103(DJ) + \varepsilon$. Detailed statistics are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Beta	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
	B	Std. Error				Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1	Constant	1.849	0.196	9.436	<0.001	1.461	2.237	
	AMO	0.322	0.060	0.437	5.339	<0.001	0.203	0.442
2	Constant	2.221	0.230	9.665	<0.001	1.766	2.676	
	AMO	0.407	0.066	0.552	6.210	<0.001	0.277	0.537
	INTRO	-0.154	0.053	-0.257	-2.889	0.005	-0.259	-0.048
3	Constant	2.547	0.280	9.108	<0.001	1.993	3.100	
	AMO	0.390	0.065	0.528	5.963	<0.001	0.260	0.519
	INTRO	-0.116	0.056	-0.193	-2.073	0.040	-0.227	-0.005
	DJ	-0.103	0.051	-0.166	-1.994	0.048	-0.205	-0.001

a. Dependent Variable: Job Stress

Note: DENT = Identified Regulation, EXTER = External Regulation, AMO = Amotivation, INTRI = Intrinsic Motivation, INTEG = Integrated Regulation, INTRO = Introjected Regulation, ECO = Entrepreneurial Creativity Orientation, LO = Lifestyle Orientation, TFO = Technical/Functional Orientation, JS = Job Stress, DJ = Distributive Justice.

DISCUSSIONS

This study tested three hypotheses regarding correlates of job stress among employees in the Vietnamese F&B sector. The findings provided partial support for the hypothesized relationships. Specifically, among the primary hypotheses, evidence supported H₁ and H₃, whereas H₂ was not supported. Regarding the primary hypotheses, H₁ (work motivation and job stress) received partial support. Although several motivation dimensions were not significantly related to job stress, the results indicated that amotivation (AMO) was positively associated with job stress in both correlation analyses and the regression model. In addition, introjected regulation (INTRO) emerged as a significant negative predictor of job stress in the regression model. Taken together, these findings suggest that motivation is related to job stress, but the association depends on the specific motivational quality rather than reflecting a uniform effect across all motivational forms. Also among the primary hypotheses, H₃ (distributive justice and job stress) was supported. Distributive justice (DJ) showed a significant negative correlation with job stress and remained a significant negative predictor in the regression model. This pattern indicates that employees who perceived higher fairness in outcomes (e.g., pay, recognition, and rewards) reported lower job stress. Turning to the last hypothesis, H₂ (career orientation and job stress) was not supported. None of the career orientation dimensions assessed in this study (entrepreneurial creativity orientation, lifestyle orientation, and technical or functional orientation) was significantly associated with job stress. Thus, career orientation did not correlate directly with job stress in this sample.

A study of fast-food restaurants in Helsinki, Finland, highlights how fair task distribution and effective reward systems can support employee well-being in similar settings. When workloads are shared fairly among staff, perceptions of injustice decrease, reducing stress. Furthermore, performance-based reward and recognition systems help increase motivation (Southgate & Mondo, 2017). Our findings support this view. As shown in Table 6, distributive justice was negatively associated with job stress, suggesting that fairness in pay and rewards is associated with lower stress levels. This shows that distributive justice is not only an ethical principle but also a key factor in supporting mental well-being in the workplace. Despite its importance, few studies have focused directly on how distributive justice affects job stress. This study offers explanations for this link. When employees perceive fairness in outcome distributions such as pay, rewards, and workload, they are more likely to feel valued and respected. This sense of fairness helps reduce frustration and work-related anxiety (Colquitt et al., 2001; Greenberg, 1990). Therefore, promoting distributive justice in the workplace is vital not only for improving motivation but also for reducing job stress and supporting long-term employee well-being.

According to Moningka's (2014) study, the paired-samples correlation table shows a strong relationship between employee motivation and job stress. The study concludes that as job stress increases, employee motivation tends to decrease, a finding that aligns with our research. Specifically, our findings reveal that amotivation is positively and significantly associated with job stress. Although amotivation is theoretically distinct from more autonomous forms of motivation, this study observed positive associations with intrinsic motivation, integrated regulation, and introjected regulation. This finding may reflect response-style or contextual influences, whereby employees simultaneously experience multiple motivational states in demanding work environments. However, in the study by Erawati et al. (2019), a negative relationship between stress and motivation was observed, though the result was not statistically significant. This lack of significance may be attributed to treating motivation as a mediating variable, which may not have fully captured the relationship between stress and job performance. In contrast, the present study considers motivation as an independent variable, thereby demonstrating that different types of motivation can directly influence job stress. At the same time, intrinsic motivation shows a negative and significant relationship. These results suggest that employees who lack motivation entirely are more likely to experience higher levels of stress. In contrast, those driven by internal pressures, such as guilt or self-imposed expectations, tend to experience lower stress levels. Interestingly, intrinsic motivation, while not fully autonomous, was associated with lower stress. This may suggest that internal pressure, such as guilt or fear of failure, can still encourage task completion and reduce stress, although not as healthily as intrinsic motivation. This is consistent with Gagné and Deci (2005), who noted that internalized values, even if not fully integrated, may help protect against burnout.

In addition, a relevant study by Nie et al. (2015) provides further empirical support for our findings, particularly regarding the relationship between amotivation and job stress. Specifically, their correlation analysis revealed a medium positive and statistically significant relationship between amotivation and work stress, indicating that employees who

experience a lack of motivation, characterized by an absence of intentionality, purpose, or value in their work, tend to report higher levels of stress in the workplace. This finding is consistent with our results, which similarly suggest that motivation plays a critical role in regulating employees' emotional responses and stress levels at work. However, an interesting nuance in Nie and colleagues' study lies in their analysis of introjected regulation, a partially internalized form of motivation in which individuals act to avoid guilt or maintain self-worth. Introjected regulation was not significantly correlated with job stress at the bivariate level, but emerged as a significant predictor in the regression analysis. This discrepancy likely reflects a suppression effect arising from shared variance among the motivation dimensions. These findings also highlight the need for further in-depth research to examine the mediating or moderating roles of other factors in the relationship between motivation and job stress.

In this study, career orientation did not exhibit a statistically significant relationship with job stress. Several potential explanations may account for this finding. Firstly, limitations in sample size or sample characteristics may have constrained the ability to detect a genuine effect. If the sample lacked sufficient variability in career orientation or job stress levels, this could have weakened the observed association. Secondly, stronger predictors of job stress, such as intrinsic motivation or perceptions of distributive justice, may have exerted a more dominant influence in the model, thereby overshadowing the potential effect of career orientation. Another plausible explanation is that career orientation may not directly influence job stress but instead exerts an indirect effect through other mediating or moderating variables that were not included in the current analytical model. For instance, factors such as personal values, coping strategies, and organizational support systems may interact with an individual's career orientation to shape their workplace stress experience. The absence of these variables in the analysis obscured the true pathways through which career orientation might impact job-related stress. Furthermore, our findings align with those of Carlson and Rotondo (2001), who similarly reported that internal career orientation was not significantly associated with promotion-related stress levels. This consistency across studies suggests that individual perceptions of career trajectory, especially when internally driven, may not be as influential on stress as previously assumed at least not in a direct or isolated manner. It reinforces the notion that career development and stress are multifaceted phenomena, influenced by a complex interplay of individual, relational, and organizational factors. Future research would benefit from including a broader range of psychological and contextual variables to more fully capture the dynamics between career orientation and job stress.

Additionally, our analysis revealed that working hours significantly shape motivational patterns, particularly introjected regulation and identified regulation. As shown in Table 3, employees who worked more than 9 hours per day reported significantly higher levels of introjected regulation than those who worked fewer than 7 hours. This suggests that in high-demand environments, employees may increasingly rely on internalized but pressure-driven forms of motivation to cope with extended work hours. Similarly, identified regulation and integrated regulation were higher in groups with longer working hours, indicating that employees with longer shifts may develop stronger personal identification with their roles. However, job stress itself did not differ significantly across work-hour groups, suggesting that stress is influenced more by individual motivational patterns and perceptions of fairness than by working hours alone.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the relationships among motivation, distributive justice, career orientation, and job stress in the F&B industry. The results showed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation significantly affect employees' perceived job stress. Distributive justice also showed a small but statistically significant negative association with job stress by ensuring fair job assignments and compensation. Promoting fairness in workload and pay is essential to improving motivation and organizational commitment in this high-pressure sector. Although career orientation did not show a significant effect in this model, it remains an important factor for future research. Understanding employees' long-term goals and development needs could offer further insights into managing stress in the F&B industry. The findings emphasize the need to build a supportive, fair, and motivating work environment that addresses the specific demands of the F&B sector. Future studies should explore career orientation more deeply and examine additional psychological and organizational factors to understand better how to reduce job stress in this service industry.

The findings of this study offer important implications for human resource management and organizational practices in the F&B industry, especially in emerging markets such as Vietnam. The negative links between amotivation, introjected regulation, and employee well-being highlight the need to strengthen autonomous motivation. Organizations should redesign jobs to support autonomy, competence, and relatedness, in line with the principles of Self-Determination Theory. Managers should promote intrinsic motivation by offering meaningful tasks, involving employees in decision-making, and providing professional development aligned with personal values. The significant negative relationship between distributive justice and job stress underlines the importance of fair compensation and resource distribution. In the highly competitive F&B sector, employees often compare their efforts and rewards. Transparent performance management systems with clear and consistently applied evaluation criteria are essential. Although career orientation did not directly affect job stress in this study, it may still influence how employees respond to workplace challenges. As careers become more diverse, organizations should offer flexible development paths tailored to individual needs. Career counseling and personalized planning can help reduce stress and improve employee well-being. The finding that employees working fewer than seven hours showed lower motivation suggests possible under-utilization. To address this, companies should offer all employees, regardless of shift length, access to meaningful tasks and growth opportunities. Strategies such as job enrichment and inclusive communication can enhance engagement and motivation.

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to make causal claims about the relationships between motivation, distributive justice, and job stress. While significant associations were found, the direction and sequence of these relationships remain unclear. Future studies should use longitudinal designs to understand better how these variables change over time. Second, the study relied entirely on self-report measures, which may introduce common-method bias and social desirability bias. Cultural norms in Vietnam, such as the emphasis on harmony and avoiding conflict, may have influenced participants' willingness to report negative experiences. Lastly, the study did not explore mediating or moderating factors that could explain how motivation affects stress. Variables such as psychological resources, coping styles, and organizational support may play important roles. Future research should use longitudinal methods to identify cause-and-effect relationships and track changes in motivation and stress over time. Researchers should also examine mediating factors, such as psychological capital, perceived organizational support, and coping strategies, to understand how motivation influences stress. Studies should examine moderators like cultural values, age differences, and leadership quality to explore under what conditions these relationships are stronger or weaker.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: ANOVA Table

Items	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Motivation - Identified Regulation	Between Groups	28.110	2	14.055	7.035 .001
	Within Groups	239.740	120	1.998	
	Total	267.850	122		
Motivation - External Regulation	Between Groups	0.505	2	0.253	0.159 0.854
	Within Groups	191.231	120	1.594	
	Total	191.736	122		
Motivation - Amotivation	Between Groups	2.756	2	1.378	0.872 0.421
	Within Groups	189.685	120	1.581	
	Total	192.441	122		
Motivation - Intrinsic Motivation	Between Groups	10.868	2	5.434	2.564 0.081
	Within Groups	254.320	120	2.119	
	Total	265.189	122		
Motivation - Integrated Regulation	Between Groups	31.691	2	15.845	8.036 0.001
	Within Groups	236.607	120	1.972	
	Total	268.298	122		
Motivation - Introjected Regulation	Between Groups	15.310	2	7.655	3.326 0.039
	Within Groups	276.143	120	2.301	
	Total	291.453	122		
Career Orientation - Entrepreneurial Creativity Orientation	Between Groups	0.143	2	0.072	0.047 0.954
	Within Groups	183.087	120	1.526	
	Total	183.230	122		
Career Orientation - Lifestyle	Between Groups	4.790	2	2.395	1.561 0.214

Orientation	Within Groups	184.117	120	1.534		
	Total	188.907	122			
Career Orientation - Technical/Functional Orientation	Between Groups	3.793	2	1.897	1.043	0.355
	Within Groups	218.115	120	1.818		
	Total	221.908	122			
Job Stress	Between Groups	0.444	2	0.222	0.255	0.775
	Within Groups	104.408	120	0.870		
	Total	104.852	122			
Distributive Justice	Between Groups	1.310	2	0.655	0.286	0.751
	Within Groups	274.274	120	2.286		
	Total	275.583	122			

Appendix B: Multiple Comparisons (Tukey HSD) Table

Dependent Variable	(I) Working Hours per day	(J) Working Hours per day	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Motivation - Identified Regulation	<7 hours	8 hours	-1.62189*	0.50180	0.004	-2.8127	-0.4311
		>9 hours	-1.92908*	0.51428	0.001	-3.1496	-0.7086
	8 hours	<7 hours	1.62189*	0.50180	0.004	0.4311	2.8127
		>9 hours	-0.30719	0.26893	0.490	-0.9454	0.3310
	>9 hours	<7 hours	1.92908*	0.51428	0.001	0.7086	3.1496
		8 hours	0.30719	0.26893	0.490	-0.3310	0.9454
Motivation - External Regulation	<7 hours	8 hours	-0.20066	0.44816	0.895	-1.2642	0.8629
		>9 hours	-0.09693	0.45932	0.976	-1.1870	0.9931
	8 hours	<7 hours	0.20066	0.44816	0.895	-0.8629	1.2642
		>9 hours	0.10374	0.24019	0.902	-0.4663	0.6737
	>9 hours	<7 hours	0.09693	0.45932	0.976	-0.9931	1.1870
		8 hours	-0.10374	0.24019	0.902	-0.6737	0.4663
Motivation - Amotivation	<7 hours	8 hours	-0.12438	0.44635	0.958	-1.1836	0.9349
		>9 hours	0.19149	0.45746	0.908	-0.8941	1.2771
	8 hours	<7 hours	0.12438	0.44635	0.958	-0.9349	1.1836
		>9 hours	0.31587	0.23922	0.387	-0.2518	0.8836
	>9 hours	<7 hours	-0.19149	0.45746	0.908	-1.2771	0.8941
		8 hours	-0.31587	0.23922	0.387	-0.8836	0.2518
Motivation - Intrinsic Motivation	<7 hours	8 hours	-1.01603	0.51683	0.125	-2.2425	0.2105
		>9 hours	-1.19937	0.52969	0.065	-2.4564	0.0577
	8 hours	<7 hours	1.01603	0.51683	0.125	-0.2105	2.2425
		>9 hours	-0.18334	0.27699	0.786	-0.8407	0.4740
	>9 hours	<7 hours	1.19937	0.52969	0.065	-0.0577	2.4564
		8 hours	0.18334	0.27699	0.786	-0.4740	0.8407
Motivation - Integrated Regulation	<7 hours	8 hours	-1.70426*	0.49851	0.002	-2.8873	-0.5212
		>9 hours	-2.04807*	0.51091	0.000	-3.2605	-0.8356
	8 hours	<7 hours	1.70426*	0.49851	0.002	0.5212	2.8873
		>9 hours	-0.34381	0.26717	0.405	-0.9778	0.2902
	>9 hours	<7 hours	2.04807*	0.51091	0.000	0.8356	3.2605
		8 hours	0.34381	0.26717	0.405	-0.2902	0.9778
Motivation - Introjected Regulation	<7 hours	8 hours	-1.17579	0.53855	0.078	-2.4538	0.1023
		>9 hours	-1.42317*	0.55195	0.030	-2.7330	-0.1133
	8 hours	<7 hours	1.17579	0.53855	0.078	-0.1023	2.4538
		>9 hours	-0.24738	0.28863	0.668	-0.9323	0.4376
	>9 hours	<7 hours	1.42317*	0.55195	0.030	0.1133	2.7330
		8 hours	0.24738	0.28863	0.668	-0.4376	0.9323
Career Orientation - Entrepreneurial Creativity Orientation	<7 hours	8 hours	-0.12968	0.43852	0.953	-1.1703	0.9110
		>9 hours	-0.13286	0.44943	0.953	-1.1994	0.9337
	8 hours	<7 hours	0.12968	0.43852	0.953	-0.9110	1.1703
		>9 hours	-0.00318	0.23502	1.000	-0.5609	0.5546
	>9 hours	<7 hours	0.13286	0.44943	0.953	-0.9337	1.1994
		8 hours	0.00318	0.23502	1.000	-0.5546	0.5609
Career Orientation - Lifestyle Orientation	<7 hours	8 hours	-0.09420	0.43975	0.975	-1.1378	0.9494
		>9 hours	0.32009	0.45069	0.758	-0.7495	1.3897
	8 hours	<7 hours	0.09420	0.43975	0.975	-0.9494	1.1378
		>9 hours	0.41429	0.23568	0.188	-0.1450	0.9736
	>9 hours	<7 hours	-0.32009	0.45069	0.758	-1.3897	0.7495
		8 hours	-0.41429	0.23568	0.188	-0.9736	0.1450
Career Orientation - Technical/Functional Orientation	<7 hours	8 hours	-0.11808	0.47863	0.967	-1.2539	1.0178
		>9 hours	0.25201	0.49054	0.865	-0.9121	1.4161
	8 hours	<7 hours	0.11808	0.47863	0.967	-1.0178	1.2539
		>9 hours	0.37009	0.25652	0.322	-0.2387	0.9788
	>9 hours	<7 hours	-0.25201	0.49054	0.865	-1.4161	0.9121
		8 hours	-0.37009	0.25652	0.322	-0.9788	0.2387
Job Stress	<7 hours	8 hours	0.21872	0.33115	0.787	-0.5671	1.0046

		>9 hours	0.23982	0.33939	0.760	-0.5656	1.0452
8 hours		<7 hours	-0.21872	0.33115	0.787	-1.0046	0.5671
		>9 hours	0.02110	0.17748	0.992	-0.4001	0.4423
		>9 hours	-0.23982	0.33939	0.760	-1.0452	0.5656
Distributive Justice	<7 hours	8 hours	-0.02110	0.17748	0.992	-0.4423	0.4001
		8 hours	-0.00249	0.53672	1.000	-1.2762	1.2712
		>9 hours	-0.21454	0.55008	0.920	-1.5200	1.0909
	8 hours	<7 hours	0.00249	0.53672	1.000	-1.2712	1.2762
		>9 hours	-0.21205	0.28765	0.742	-0.8947	0.4706
		>9 hours	0.21454	0.55008	0.920	-1.0909	1.5200
	>9 hours	<7 hours	0.21205	0.28765	0.742	-0.4706	0.8947
		8 hours	0.21205	0.28765	0.742	-0.4706	0.8947

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

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